



ENDYMION

'The same bright face I tasted in
my sleep,
Smiling in the clear well'

THE POETICAL WORKS
OF
JOHN KEATS

ILLUSTRATED BY A.A. DIXON



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POEMS PUBLISHED IN 1817

'What more felicity can fall to creature
'Than to enjoy delight with liberty.'

Fate of the Butterfly.—SPENSER

DEDICATION

TO LEIGH HUNT, ESQ.

GLORY and loveliness have pass'd away ;
For if we wander out in early morn,
No wreathed incense do we see upborne
Into the east to meet the smiling day :
No crowd of nymphs soft voic'd and young and
gay,

In woven baskets bringing ears of corn,
Roses, and pinks, and violets, to adorn
The shrine of Flora in her early May.
But there are left delights as high as these.
And I shall ever bless my destiny,
That in a time when under pleasant trees
Pan is no longer sought, I feel a free,
A leafy luxury, seeing I could please
With these poor offerings, a man like thee.

'I STOOD TIP-TOE UPON A LITTLE HILL'

'Places of nestling green for Poets made'

Story of Rumi.

I stood tip-toe upon a little hill,
The air was cooling, and so very still,
That the sweet buds which with a modest pride
Pall droopingly, in slanting curve aside,
Their scanty leav'd, and finely tapering stems,
Had not yet lost those starry diadems
Caught from the early sobbing of the morn.
The clouds were pure and white as flocks new
shorn,
And fresh from the clear brook; sweetly they slept
On the blue fields of heaven, and then there crept
A little noiseless noise among the leaves,
Born of the very sigh that silence heaves:
For not the faintest motion could be seen
Of all the shades that slanted o'er the green.
There was wide wandering for the greediest eye,
To peer about upon variety;
Far round the horizon's crystal air to skim;
And trace the dwindled edgings of its brim;
To picture out the quaint and curious bending
Of a fresh woodland alley, never ending,
Or by the bowery clefts, and leafy shelves,
Guess where the jaunty streams refresh themselves:
I gazed awhile, and felt as light, and free
As though the fanning wings of Mercury

10 'I STOOD TIP-TOE UPON A HILL'

Had play'd upon my heels : I was light-hearted,
And many pleasures to my vision started ;
So I straightway began to pluck a posy
Of luxuries bright, milky, soft and rosy.

A bush of May-flowers with the bees about them ;
Ah, sure no tasteful nook would be without them !
And let a lush laburnum oversweep them,
And let long grass grow round the roots to keep the
Moist, cool and green , and shade the violets,
That they may bind the moss in leafy nets.
A filbert hedge with wild brier overtwin'd,
And clumps of woodbine taking the soft wind
Upon their summer thrones ; there too should be
The frequent chequer of a youngling tree,
That with a score of light green brethren shoots
From the quaint mossiness of aged roots .
Round which is heard a spring-head of clear waters,
Babbling so wildly of its lovely daughters,
The spreading blue-bells . it may haply mourn
That such fair clusters should be rudely torn
From their fresh beds, and scattered thoughtlessly
By infant hands, left on the path to die.

Open afresh your round of starry folds,
Ye ardent marigolds !
Dry up the moisture from your golden lids,
For great Apollo bids
That in these days your praises should be sung
On many harps, which he has lately strung ;
And when again your dewiness he kisses,
Tell him, I have you in my world of blisses :
So haply when I rove in some far vale,
His mighty voice may come upon the gale.

Here are sweet peas, on tip-toe for a flight :
With wings of gentle flush o'er delicate white,
And taper fingers catching at all things,
To bind them all about with tiny rings.

Linger awhile upon some bending planks
That lean against a streamlet's rushy banks,
And watch intently Nature's gentle doings :
They will be found softer than ring-dove's cooings.
How silent comes the water round that bend ;
Not the minutest whisper does it send
To the o'erhanging salallows : blades of grass
Slowly across the chequer'd shadows pass.
Why, you might read two sonnets, ere they reach
To where the hurrying freshnesses aye preach
A natural sermon o'er their pebbly beds ;
Where swarms of minnows show their little heads,
Staying their wavy bodies 'gainst the streams,
To taste the luxury of sunny beams
Temper'd with coolness. How they ever wrestle
With their own sweet delight, - and ever nestle
Their silver bellies on the pebbly sand.
If you but scantily hold out the hand,
That very instant not one will remain ;
But turn your eye, and they are there again.
The ripples seem right glad to reach those cresses,
And cool themselves among the emerald tresses ;
The while they cool themselves, they freshness give,
And moisture, that the bowery green may live :
So keeping up an interchange of favours,
Like good men in the truth of their behaviours.
Sometimes goldfinches one by one will drop
From low hung branches : little space they stop ;
But sip, and twitter, and their feathers sleek ;
Then off at once, as in a wanton freak
Or perhaps, to show their black, and golden wings,
Pausing upon their yellow flutterings.
Were I in such a place, I sure should pray
That naught less sweet, might call my thoughts away,
Than the soft rustle of a maiden's gown
Fanning away the dandelion's down ;
Than the light music of her nimble toes
Patting against the sorrel as she goes.

12 'I STOOD TIP-TOE UPON A HILL

How she would start, and blush, thus to be caught
 Playing in all her innocence of thought !
 O let me lead her gently o'er the brook,
 Watch her half-smiling lips and downward look ;
 O let me for one moment touch her wrist ;
 Let me one moment to her breathing list ;
 And as she leaves me may she often turn
 Her fair eyes looking through her locks auburne .
 What next ? A tuft of evening primroses,
 O'er which the mind may hover till it dozes ;
 O'er which it well might take a pleasant sleep ,
 But that 'tis ever startled by the leap
 Of buds into ripe flowers ; or by the flitting
 Of diverse moths, that aye their rest are quitting ;
 Or by the moon lifting her silver rim
 Above a cloud, and with a gradual swim
 Coming into the blue with all her light.
 O Maker of sweet poets ! dear delight
 Of this fair world, and all its gentle livers ;
 Spangler of clouds, halo of crystal rivers,
 Mingler with leaves, and dew and tumbling streams,
 Closer of lovely eyes to lovely dreams,
 Lover of loneliness, and wandering,
 Of upcast eye, and tender pondering !
 Thee must I praise above all other glories
 That smile us on to tell delightful stories
 For what has made the sage or poet write
 But the fair paradise of Nature's light ?
 In the calm grandeur of a sober line,
 We see the waving of the mountain pine ;
 And when a tale is beautifully staid,
 We feel the safety of a hawthorn glade :
 When it is moving on luxurious wings,
 The soul is lost in pleasant smotherings :
 Fair dewy roses brush against our faces,
 And flowering laurels spring from diamond vases ;
 O'erhead we see the jasmine and sweet-brier,
 And bloomy grapes laughing from green attire ;

While at our feet, the voice of crystal bubbles
 Charms us at once away from all our troubles
 So that we feel uplifted from the world,
 Walking upon the white clouds wreath'd and curl'd.
 So felt he, who first told how Psyche went
 On the smooth wind to realms of wonderment;
 What Psyche felt; and Love, when their full lips
 First touch'd; what amorous and fondling nips
 They gave each other's cheeks; with all their sighs,
 And how they kist each other's tremulous eyes:
 The silver lamp,—the ravishment,—the wonder—
 The darkness,—loneliness,—the fearful thunder;
 Their woes gone by, and both to heaven upflown,
 To bow for gratitude before Jove's throne.
 So did he feel, who pull'd the boughs aside,
 That we might look into a forest wide,
 To catch a glimpse of Fauns, and Dryades
 Coming with softest rustle through the trees;
 And garlands woven of flowers wild, and sweet,
 Upheld on ivory wrists, or sporting feet:
 Telling us how fair, trembling Syrinx fled
 Arcadian Pan, with such a fearful dread.
 Poor nymph,—poor Pan,—how he did weep to find,
 Nought but a lovely sighing of the wind
 Along the reedy stream; a half-heard strain,
 Full of sweet desolation—balmy pain.

What first inspired a bard of old to sing
 Narcissus pining o'er the untainted spring?
 In some delicious ramble, he had found
 A little space, with boughs all woven round;
 And in the midst of all, a clearer pool
 Than e'er reflected in its pleasant cool,
 The blue sky, here and there serenely peeping,
 Through tendril wreaths fantastically creeping.
 And on the bank a lonely flower he spied,
 A meek and forlorn flower, with naught of pride,
 Drooping its beauty o'er the watery clearness,
 To woo its own sad image into nearness:

14 'I STOOD TIP-TOE UPON A HILL'

Deaf to light Zephyrus it would not move ;
 But still would seem to droop, to pine, to love.
 So while the poet stood in this sweet spot,
 Some fainter gleamings o'er his fancy shot ;
 Nor was it long ere he had told the tale
 Of young Narcissus, and sad Echo's bale.

Where had he been, from whose warm head out-flew
 That sweetest of all songs, that ever new,
 That aye refreshing, pure deliciousness,
 Coming ever to bless
 The wanderer by moonlight ? to him bringing
 Shapes from the invisible world, unearthly singing
 From out the middle air, from flowery nests,
 And from the pillowy silkiness that rests
 Full in the speculation of the stars
 Ah ! surely he had burst our mortal bars ;
 Into some wond'rous region he had gone,
 To search for thee, divine Endymion !

He was a poet, sure a lover too,
 Who stood on Latmus' top, what time there blew
 Soft breezes from the myrtle vale below ,
 And brought, in faintness solemn, sweet, and slow,
 A hymn from Dian's temple ; while upswelling,
 The incense went to her own starry dwelling
 But though her face was clear as infant's eyes,
 Though she stood smiling o'er the sacrifice,
 The poet wept at her so piteous fate,
 Wept that such beauty should be desolate :
 So in fine wrath some golden sounds he won,
 And gave meek Cynthia her Endymion.

Queen of the wide air ; thou most lovely queen
 Of all the brightness that mine eyes have seen !
 As thou exceedest all things in thy shine,
 So every tale, does this sweet tale of thine.
 O for three words of honey, that I might
 Tell but one wonder of thy bridal night !

'I STOOD TIP-TOE UPON A HILL.' 11

Where distant ships do seem to show their keels;
Phœbus awhile delay'd his mighty wheels,
And turn'd to smile upon thy bashful eyes,
Ere he his unseen pomp would solemnise.
The evening weather was so bright, and clear,
That men of health were of unusual cheer;
Stepping like Homer at the trumpet's call,
Or young Apollo, on the pedestal:
And lovely women were as fair and warm,
As Venus looking sideways in alarm.
The breezes were ethereal, and pure,
And crept through half-closed lattices to cure
The languid sick; it cool'd their fever'd sleep,
And soothed them into slumbers full and deep.
Soon they awoke clear-eyed: nor burnt with thirsting
Nor with hot fingers; nor with temples bursting:
And springing up, they met the wond'ring sight
Of their dear friends, nigh foolish with delight;
Who feel their arms, and breasts, and kiss and stare,
And on their placid foreheads part the hair.
Young men and maidens at each other gazed,
With hands held back, and motionless, amazed,
To see the brightness in each other's eyes,
And so they stood, fill'd with a sweet surprise,
Until their tongues were loos'd in poesy.
Therefore no lover did of anguish die:
But the soft numbers, in that moment spoken,
Made silken ties, that never may be broken
Cynthia! I cannot tell the greater blisses,
That follow'd thine, and thy dear shepherd's kisses:
Was there a poet born?—but now no more—
My wand'ring spirit must no further soar.—

SPECIMEN OF AN INDUCTION TO A POEM

Lo! I must tell a tale of chivalry;
For large white plumes are dancing in mine eye.
Not like the formal crest of latter days:
But bending in a thousand graceful ways;
So graceful, that it seems no mortal hand,
Or e'en the touch of Archimago's wand,
Could charm them into such an attitude.
We must think rather, that in playful mood,
Some mountain breeze had turn'd its chief delight
To show this wonder of its gentle might.
Lo! I must tell a tale of chivalry;
For while I muse, the lance points slantingly
Athwart the morning air: some lady sweet,
Who cannot feel for cold her tender feet,
From the worn top of some old battlement
Hails it with tears, her stout defender sent
And from her own pure self no joy dissembling,
Wraps round her ample robe with happy trembling.
Sometimes when the good knight his rest would take,
It is reflected, clearly, in a lake,
With the young ashen boughs, 'gainst which it rests,
And th' half seen mossiness of linnets' nests
Ah! shall I ever tell its cruelty,
When the fire flashes from a warrior's eye,
And his tremendous hand is grasping it,
And his dark brow for very wrath is knit?
Or when his spirit, with more calm intent,
Leaps to the honours of a tournament,
And makes the gazers round about the ring
Stare at the grandeur of the balancing?
No, no! this is far off:—then how shall I
Revive the dying tones of minstrelsy,

Which linger yet about long Gothic arches,
 In dark green ivy, and among wild larches?
 How sing the splendour of the revelries,
 When butts of wine are drunk off to the lees?
 And that bright lance, against the fretted wall,
 Beneath the shade of stately banneral,
 Is slung with shining cuirass, sword, and shield?
 Where ye may see a spur in bloody field.
 Light-footed damsels move with gentle paces
 Round the wide hall, and show their happy faces;
 Or stand in courtly talk by fives and sevens:
 Like those fair stars that twinkle in the heavens.
 Yet must I tell a tale of chivalry:
 Or wherefore comes that knight so proudly by?
 Wherefore more proudly does the gentle knight,
 Rein in the swelling of his ample might?

Spenser! thy brows are arched, open, kind,
 And come like a clear sunrise to my mind;
 And always does my heart with pleasure dance,
 When I think on thy noble countenance:
 Where never yet was aught more earthly seen
 Than the pure freshness of thy laurels green.
 Therefore, great bard, I not so fearfully
 Call on thy gentle spirit to hover nigh
 My daring steps: or if thy tender care,
 Thus startled unaware,
 Be jealous that the foot of other wight
 Should madly follow that bright path of light
 Trac'd by thy lov'd Libertas; he will speak,
 And tell thee that my prayer is very meek;
 That I will follow with due reverence,
 And start with awe at mine own strange pretence.
 Him thou wilt hear; so I will rest in hope
 To see wide plains, fair trees, and lawny slope.
 The morn, the eve, the light, the shade, the flowers;
 Clear streams, smooth lakes, and overlooking towers.

CALIDORE

A FRAGMENT

YOUNG Calidore is paddling o'er the lake ;
His healthful spirit eager and awake
To feel the beauty of a silent eve,
Which seem'd full loath this happy world to leave,
The light dwelt o'er the scene so lingeringly.
He bares his forehead to the cool blue sky,
And smiles at the far clearness all around,
Until his heart is well-nigh over wound,
And turns for calmness to the pleasant green
Of easy slopes, and shadowy trees that lean
So elegantly o'er the waters' brim
And show their blossoms trim.
Scarce can his clear and nimble eyesight follow
The freaks, and dartings of the black-wing'd swallow,
Delighting much, to see it half at rest,
Dip so refreshingly its wings and breast
 'inst the smooth surface, and to mark anon,
 widening circles into nothing gone

 d now the sharp keel of his little boat
Comes up with ripple, and with easy float,
And glides into a bed of water-lilies :
Broad-leav'd are they, and their white canopies
Are upward turn'd to catch the heavens' dew.
Near to a little island's point they grew ;
Whence Calidore might have the goodliest view
Of this sweet spot of earth. The bowery shore
Went off in gentle windings to the hoar
And light blue mountains : but no breathing man
With a warm-heart, and eye prepared to scan
Nature's clear beauty, could pass lightly by
Objects that look'd out so invitingly

On either side. These, gentle Calidore
Greeted, as he had known them long before.

The sidelong view of swelling leafiness,
Which the glad setting sun in gold doth dress,
Whence, ever and anon, the jay outsprings,
And scales upon the beauty of its wings.
The lonely turret, shatter'd, and outworn,
Stands venerably proud; too proud to mourn
Its long-lost grandeur. fir-trees grow around,
Aye dropping their hard fruit upon the ground.

The little chapel, with the cross above,
Upholding wreaths of ivy; the white dove,
That on the windows spreads his feathers light,
And seems from purple clouds to wing its flight.

Green tufted islands casting their soft shades
Across the lake, sequester'd leafy glades,
That through the dimness of their twilight show
Large dock leaves, spiral foxgloves, or the glow
Of the wild cat's eyes, or the silvery stems
Of delicate birch-trees, or long grass which hems
A little brook. The youth had long been viewing
These pleasant things, and heaven was bedewing
The mountain flowers, when his glad senses caught
A trumpet's silver voice. Ah! it was fraught
With many joys for him: the warder's ken
Had found white coursers prancing in the glen:
Friends very dear to him he soon will see;
So pushes off his boat most eagerly.
And soon upon the lake he skims along,
Deaf to the nightingale's first under-song;
Nor minds he the white swans that dream so sweetly:
His spirit flies before him so completely.

And now he turns a jutting point of land,
Whence may be seen the castle gloomy and grand:

Nor will a bee buzz round two swelling peaches,
Before the point of his light shallop reaches
Those marble steps that through the water dip :
Now over them he goes with hasty trip,
And scarcely stays to ope the folding doors :
Anon he leaps along the oaken floors
Of halls and corridors.

Delicious sounds ! those little bright-eyed things
That float about the air on azure wings,
Had been less heartfelt by him than the clang
Of clattering hoofs ; into the court he sprang,
Just as two noble steeds, and palfreys twain,
Were slanting out their necks with loosened rein ;
While from beneath the threatening portcullis
They brought their happy burthens. What a kiss,
What gentle squeeze he gave each lady's hand !
How tremblingly their delicate ankles spann'd !
Into how sweet a trance his soul was gone,
While whisperings of affection
Made him delay to let their tender feet
Come to the earth ; with an incline so sweet
From their low palfreys o'er his neck they bent :
And whether there were tears of languishment,
Or that the evening dew had pearl'd their tresses
He feels a moisture on his cheek, and blesses
With lips that tremble, and with glistening eye,
All the soft luxury
That nestled in his arms. A dimpled hand,
Fair as some wonder out of fairy land,
Hung from his shoulder like the drooping flowers
Of whitest Cassia, fresh from summer showers :
And this he fondled with his happy cheek
As if for joy he would no further seek ;
When the kind voice of good Sir Clerimond
Came to his ear, like something from beyond
His present being, so he gently drew
His warm arms, thrilling now with pulses new,

From their sweet thrall, and forward gently bending,
Thank'd Heaven that his joy was never-ending ;
While 'gainst his forehead he devoutly press'd
A hand Heaven made to succour the distress'd ;
A hand that from the world's bleak promontory
Had lifted Calidore for deeds of Glory.

Amid the pages, and the torches' glare,
There stood a knight, patting the flowing hair
Of his proud horse's mane : he was withal
A man of elegance, and stature tall :
So that the waving of his plumes would be
High as the berries of a wild ash-tree,
Or as the winged cap of Mercury.
His armour was so dexterously wrought
In shape, that sure no living man had thought
It hard, and heavy steel : but that indeed
It was some glorious form, some splendid weed,
In which a spirit new come from the skies
Might live, and show itself to human eyes.
'Tis the far-fam'd, the brave-Sir Gondibert,
Said the good man to Calidore alert ;
While the young warrior with a step of grace
Came up,—a courtly smile upon his face,
And mailed hand held out, ready to greet
The large-eyed wonder, and ambitious heat
Of the aspiring boy ; who as he led
Those smiling ladies, often turn'd his head
To admire the visor arch'd so gracefully
Over a knightly brow ; while they went by
The lamps that from the high-roof'd hall were pendent,
And gave the steel a shining quite transcendent.

Soon in a pleasant chamber they are seated ;
The sweet-lipp'd ladies have already greeted
All the green leaves that round the window clamber,
To show their purple stars, and bells of amber.

Sir Gondibert has doff'd his shining steel,
Gladdening in the free and airy feel
Of a light mantle ; and while Clerimond
Is looking round about him with a fond,
And placid eye, young Calidore is burning
To hear of knightly deeds, and gallant spurning
Of all unworthiness ; and how the strong of arm
Kept off dismay, and terror, and alarm
From lovely woman : while brimful of this,
He gave each damsel's hand so warm a kiss,
And had such manly ardour in his eye,
That each at other look'd half-staringly :
And then their features started into smiles,
Sweet as blue heavens o'er enchanted isles.

Softly the breezes from the forest came,
Softly they blew aside the taper's flame ;
Clear was the song from Philomel's far bower ;
Grateful the incense from the lime-tree flower ;
Mysterious, wild, the far heard trumpet's tone ;
Lovely the moon in ether, all alone .
Sweet too the converse of these happy mortals,
As that of busy spirits when the portals
Are closing in the West ; or that soft humming
We hear around when Hesperus is coming
Sweet be their sleep.

TO SOME LADIES

ON RECEIVING A CURIOUS SHELL

WHAT though, while the wonders of nature exploring,
I cannot your light, mazy footsteps attend ;
Nor listen to accents, that almost adoring,
Bless Cynthia's face, the enthusiast's friend :

Yet over the steep, whence the mountain-stream rushes,
With you, kindest friends, in idea I rove ;
Mark the clear tumbling crystal, its passionate gushes,
Its spray, that the wild flower kindly bedews.

Why linger you so, the wild labyrinth strolling?
Why breathless, unable your bliss to declare?
Ah ! you list to the nightingale's tender condoling,
Responsive to sylphs, in the moon-beamy air.

'Tis morn, and the flowers with dew are yet drooping,
I see you are treading the verge of the sea .
And now ! ah, I see it—you just now are stooping
To pick up the keepsake intended for me.

If a cherub, on pinions of silver descending,
Had brought me a gem from the fret-work of
Heaven ;
And smiles, with his star-cheering voice sweetly
blending,
The blessings of Tighe had melodiously given ;

It had not created a warmer emotion
Than the present, fair nymphs, I was blest with
from you,
Than the shell, from the bright golden sands of the
ocean
Which the emerald waves at your feet gladly threw.

FROM THE SAME LADIES

For, indeed, 'tis a sweet and peculiar pleasure
 (And blissful is he who such happiness finds),
 To possess but a span of the hour of leisure,
 In elegant, pure, and aerial minds.

FROM THE SAME LADIES

ON RECEIVING A COPY OF VERSES

HAST thou from the caves of Golconda, a gem
 Pure as the ice-drop that froze on the mountain?
 Bright as the humming-bird's green diadem,
 When it flutters in sunbeams that shine through a
 fountain?

Hast thou a goblet for dark sparkling wine?
 That goblet right heavy, and massy, and gold?
 And splendidly mark'd with the story divine
 Of Armida the fair, and Rinaldo the bold?

Hast thou a steed with a mane richly flowing?
 Hast thou a sword that thine enemy's smart is?
 Hast thou a trumpet rich melodies blowing?
 And wear'st thou the shield of the fam'd Britomartis?

What is it that hangs from thy shoulder, so brave,
 Embroider'd with many a spring-peering flower?
 Is it a scarf that thy fair lady gave?
 And hastest thou now to that fair lady's bower?

Ah! courteous Sir Knight, with large joy thou art
 crown'd,
 Full many the glories that brighten thy youth!
 I will tell thee my blisses, which richly abound
 In magical powers to bless, and to sooth.

On this scroll thou seest written in characters fair
A sun-beaming tale of a wreath, and a chain :
And, warrior, it nurtures the property rare
Of charming my mind from the trammels of pain.

This canopy mark : 'tis the work of a fay ;
Beneath its rich shade did King Oberon languish,
When lovely Titania was far, far away,
And cruelly left him to sorrow and anguish.

There, oft would he bring from his soft-sighing lute
Wild strains to which, spell-bound, the nightingales
listen'd !

The wondering spirits of Heaven were mute,
And tears 'mong the dewdrops of morning oft
glisten'd.

In this little dome, all those melodies strange,
Soft, plaintive, and melting, for ever will sigh ;
Nor e'er will the notes from their tenderness change,
Nor e'er will the music of Oberon die.

So when I am in a voluptuous vein,
I pillow my head on the sweets of the rose,
And list to the tale of the wreath, and the chain,
Till its echoes depart ; then I sink to repose.

Adieu, valiant Eric ! with joy thou art crown'd ;
Full many the glories that brighten thy youth,
I too have my blisses, which richly abound
In magical powers, to bless and to sooth.

- TO —

HADST thou liv'd in days of old,
O what wonders had been told
Of thy lively countenance,
And thy humid eyes, that dance
In the midst of their own brightness,
In the very fane of lightness ;
Over which thine eyebrows, leaning,
Picture out each lovely meaning :
In a dainty bend they lie,
Like to streaks across the sky,
Of the feathers from a crow,
Fallen on a bed of snow.
Of thy dark hair, that extends
Into many graceful bends :
As the leaves of hellebore
Turn to whence they sprung before.
And behind each ample curl
Peeps the richness of a pearl.
Downward too flows many a tress
With a glossy waviness,
Full, and round like globes that rise
From the censer to the skies
Through sunny air. Add too, the sweetness
Of thy honeyed voice ; the neatness
Of thine ankle lightly turn'd
With those beauties scarce discern'd,
Kept with such sweet privacy,
That they seldom meet the eye
Of the little Loves that fly
Round about with eager pry.
Saving when with freshening lave,
Thou dipp'st them in the taintless wave ;
Like twin water-lilies, born
In the coolness of the morn.

O, if thou hadst breathed then,
Now the Muses had been ten.
Couldst thou wish for lineage higher
Than twin sister of Thalia?
At least for ever, evermore,
Will'I call the Graces four:
Hadst thou liv'd when chivalry
Lifted up her lance on high,
Tell me what thou wouldst have been?
Ah! I see the silver sheen,
Of thy broider'd-floating vest,
Cov'ring half thine ivory breast:
Which, O Heavens! I should see,
But that cruel destiny
Has placed a golden cuirass there;
Keeping secret what is fair.
Like sunbeams in a cloudlet nested
Thy locks in knightly casque are rested:
O'er which bend four milky plumes
Like the gentle lily's blooms
Springing from a costly vase,
See with what a stately pace
Comes thine alabaster steed;
Servant of heroic deed!
O'er his loins, his trappings glow
Like the northern lights on snow.
Mount his back! thy sword unsheath!
Sign of the enchanter's death;
Bane of every wicked spell;
Silencer of dragon's yell.
Alas! thou this wilt never do:
Thou art an enchantress too,
And wilt surely never spill
Blood of those whose eyes can kill.

TO HOPE

When by my solitary hearth I sit,
And hateful thoughts enwrap my soul in gloom ;
When no fair dreams before my 'mind's eye' flit,
And the bare heath of life presents no bloom ;
Sweet Hope ! ethereal balm upon me shed,
And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head.

Whene'er I wander, at the fall of night,
Where woven boughs shut out the moon's bright ray,
Should sad Despondency my musings fright,
And frown, to drive fair Cheerfulness away,
Peep with the moonbeams through the leafy roof,
And keep that fiend Despondence far aloof.

Should Disappointment, parent of Despair,
Strive for her son to seize my careless heart ;
When, like a cloud, he sits upon the air,
Preparing on his spell-bound prey to dart :
Chase him away, sweet Hope, with visage bright,
And fright him, as the morning frightens night !

Whene'er the fate of those I hold most dear
Tells to my fearful breast a tale of sorrow,
O bright-eyed Hope, my morbid fancy cheer ;
Let me awhile thy sweetest comforts borrow :
Thy heaven-born radiance around me shed,
And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head !

Should e'er unhappy love my bosom pain,
From cruel parents, or relentless fair ;
O let me think it is not quite in vain
To sigh out sonnets to the midnight air !
Sweet Hope ! ethereal balm upon me shed,
And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head.

In the long vista of the years to roll,
 Let me not see our country's honour fade !
 O let me see our land retain her soul !
 Her pride, her freedom ; and not freedom's shade.
 From thy bright eyes unusual brightness shed—
 Beneath thy pinions canopy my head !

Let me not see the patriot's high bequest,
 Great liberty ! how great in plain attire !
 With the base purple of a court oppress'd,
 Bowing her head, and ready to expire :
 But let me see thee stoop from heaven on wings
 That fill the skies with silver glitterings !

And as, in sparkling majesty, a star
 Gilds the bright summit of some gloomy cloud ;
 Brightening the half veil'd face of heaven afar :
 So, when dark thoughts my boding spirit shroud,
 Sweet Hope ! celestial influence round me shed,
 Waving thy silver pinions o'er my head.

IMITATION OF SPENSER

* * * * *

Now Morning from her orient chamber came,
 And her first footsteps touch'd a verdant hill :
 Crowning its lawny crest with amber flame,
 Silvering the untainted gushes of its rill ;
 Which, pure from mossy beds, did down distil,
 And after parting beds of simple flowers,
 By many streams a little lake did fill,
 Which round its marge reflected woven bowers,
 And, in its middle space, a sky that never lowers.

There the kingfisher saw his plumage bright
 Vying with fish of brilliant dye below ,
 Whose silken fins' and golden scales' light
 Cast upward, through the waves, a ruby glow :
 There saw the swan his neck of arched snow,
 And oar'd himself along with majesty :
 Sparkled his jetty eyes ; his feet did show
 Beneath the waves like Atrix's ebony,
 And on his back a fay reclined voluptuously.

Ah ! could I tell the wonders of an isle
 That in that fairest lake had placed been,
 I could e'en Dido of her grief beguile ;
 Or rob from aged Lear his bitter teen :
 For sure so fair a place was never seen,
 Of all that ever charm'd romantic eye :
 It seem'd an emerald in the silver sheen
 Of the bright waters , or as when on high,
 Through clouds of fleecy white, laughs the cœrulean
 sky.

And all around it dipp'd luxuriously
 Sloping of verdure through the glossy tide,
 Which, as it were in gentle amity,
 Rippled delighted up the flowery side ;
 As if to glean the ruddy tears it tried,
 Which fell profusely from the rose-tree stem !
 Haply it was the workings of its pride,
 In strife to throw upon the shore a gem
 Outvying all the buds in Flora's diadem.

* * * * *

‘WOMAN! WHEN I BEHOLD THEE’

WOMAN! when I behold thee flippant, vain,
Inconstant, childish, proud, and full of fancies;
Without that modest softening that enhances
The downcast eye, repentant of the pain
That its mild light creates to heal again,
E'en then, elate, my spirit leaps, and prances,
E'en then my soul with exultation dances
For that to love, so long, I've dormant lain.
But when I see thee meek, and kind, and tender,
Heavens! how desperately do I adore
Thy winning graces;—to be thy defender
I hotly burn—to be a Calidore—
A very Red Cross Knight—a stout Leander—
Might I be loved by thee like these of yore.

Light feet, dark violet eyes, and parted hair;
Soft dimpled hands, white neck, and creamy breast,
Are things on which the dazzled senses rest
Till the fond, fixed eyes, forget they stare.
From such fine pictures, Heavens! I cannot dare
To turn my admiration, though unpossess'd
They be of what is worthy,—though not drest
In lovely modesty, and virtues rare.
Yet these I leave as thoughtless as a lark;
These lures I straight forget,—e'en ere I dine,
Or thrice my palate moisten: but when I mark
Such charms with mild intelligences shine,
My ear is open like a greedy shark,
To catch the tunings of a voice divine.

Ah! who can e'er forget so fair a being?
Who can forget her half-retiring sweets?
God! she is like a milk-white lamb that bleats
For man's protection Surely the All-seeing,

32 'WOMAN! WHEN I BEHOLD THEE'

Who joys to see us with his gifts agreeing,
Will never give him pinions, v ho entreats
Such innocence to ruin,—who vilely cheats
A dove-like bosom In truth there is no freeing
One's thoughts from such a beauty; when I hear
A lay that once I saw her hand awake,
Her form seems floating palpable, and near:
Had I e'er seen her from an arbour take
A dewy flower, oft would that hand appear,
And o'er my eyes the trembling moisture shake.

EPISTLES

'Among the rest a shepherd (though but young
'Yet hartned to his pipe) with all the skill
'His few yeeres could, began to fit his quill'
Britannia's Pastorals (BROWNE).

TO GEORGE FELTON MATHEW

SWEET are the pleasures that to verse belong,
And doubly sweet a brotherhood in song;
Nor can remembrance, Mathew! bring to view
A fate more pleasing, a delight more true
Than that in which the brother poets joy'd,
Who, with combined powers, their wit employ'd
To raise a trophy to the drama's muses.
The thought of this great partnership diffuses
Over the genius-loving heart, a feeling
Of all that's high, and great, and good, and healing.
Too partial friend! fain would I follow thee
Past each horizon of fine poesy;
Fain would I echo back each pleasant note
As o'er Sicilian seas, clear anthems float.
'Mong the light skimming gondolas far parted:
Just when the sun his farewell beam has darted:
But 'tis impossible; far different cares
Beckon me sternly from soft 'Lydian airs,'
And hold my faculties so long in thrall,
That I am oft in doubt whether at all
I shall again see Phœbus in the morning:
Or flush'd Aurora in the roseate dawning!
Or a white Naiad in a rippling stream;
Or a rapt seraph in a moonlight beam;
Or again witness what with thee I've seen,
The dew by fairy feet swept from the green,

After a night of some quaint jubilee
Which every elf and fay had some to see :
When bright processions took their airy march
Beneath the curved moon's triumphal arch,

But might I now each passing moment give
To the coy muse, with me she would not live
In this dark city, nor would condescend
'Mid contradictions her delights to lend,
Should e'er the fine-eyed maid to me be kind,
Ah ! surely it must be whene'er I find
Some flowery spot, sequester'd, wild, romantic,
That often must have seen a poet frantic ,
Where oaks, that erst the Druid knew, are growing,
And flowers, the glory of one day, are blowing ;
Where the dark-leaved laburnum's drooping clusters
Reflect athwart the stream their yellow lustres,
And intertwined the cassia's arms unite,
With its own drooping buds, but very white.
Where on one side are covert branches hung,
'Mong which the nightingales have always sung
In leafy quiet - where to pry, aloof,
Atween the pillars of the sylvan roof,
Would be to find where violet beds were nestling,
And where the bee with cowslip bells was wrestling.
There must be too a ruin dark, and gloomy,
To say 'joy not too much in all that's bloomy.'

Yet this is vain—O Mathew lend thy aid
To find a place where I may greet the maid—
Where we may soft humanity put on,
And sit, and rhyme, and think on Chatterton ;
And that warm-hearted Shakespeare sent to meet him
Four laurell'd spirits, heavenward to entreat him.
With reverence would we speak of all the sages
Who have left streaks of light athwart their ages :
And thou shouldst moralise on Milton's blindness,
And mourn the fearful dearth of human kindness

To those who strove with the bright golden wing
Of genius, to flap away each sting
Thrown by the pitiless world. We next could tell
Of those who in the cause of freedom fell ;
Of our own Alfred, of Helvetian Tell ;
Of him whose name to ev'ry heart's a solace,
High-minded and unbending William Wallace.
While to the rugged north our musing turns
We well might drop a tear for him, and Burns.

Felton ! without incitements such as these,
How vain for me the niggard Muse to tease :
For thee, she will thy every dwelling grace,
And make ' a sunshine in a shady place ' :
For thou wast once a flow'ret blooming wild,
Close to the source, bright, pure, and undefiled,
Whence gush the streams of song : in happy hour
Came chaste Diana from her shady bower,
Just as the sun was from the east uprising ;
And, as for him some gift she was devising,
Beheld thee, plück'd thee, cast thee in the stream
To meet her glorious brother's greeting beam.
I marvel much that thou hast never told
How, from a flower, into a fish of gold
Apollo chang'd thee ; how thou next didst seem
A black-eyed-swan upon the widening stream ;
And when thou first didst in that mirror trace
The placid features of a human face,
That thou hast never told thy travels strange,
And all the wonders of the mazy range
O'er pebbly crystal, and o'er golden sands ;
Kissing thy daily food from Naiad's pearly hands.

TO MY BROTHER GEORGE

Full many a dreary hour have I past,
 My brain bewilder'd, and my mind o'creast
 With heaviness ; in seasons when I've thought
 No spherey strains by me could e'er be caught
 From the blue dome, though I to dimness gaze
 On the far depth where sheeted lightning plays ;
 Or, on the wavy grass outstretch'd supinely,
 Pry 'mong the stars, to strive to think divinely :
 That I should never hear Apollo's song,
 Though feathery clouds were floating all along
 The purple west, and, two bright streaks between,
 The golden lyre itself were dimly seen :
 That the still murmur of the honey-bee
 Would never teach a rural song to me :
 That the bright glance from beauty's eyelids slanting
 Would never make a lay of mine enchanting,
 Or warm my breast with ardour to unfold
 Some tale of love and arms in time of old.

But there are times, when those that love the bay,
 Fly from all sorrowing far, far away ;
 A sudden glow comes on them, naught they see
 In water, earth, or air, but poesy.
 It has been said, dear George, and true I hold it
 (For knightly Spenser to Libertas told it),
 That when a Poet is in such a trance,
 In air he sees white coursers paw and prance,
 Bestriden of gay knights, in gay apparel,
 Who at each other tilt in playful quarrel ;
 And what we, ignorantly, sheet-lightning call,
 Is the swift opening of their wide portal,
 When the bright warder blows his trumpet clear,
 Whose tones reach naught on earth but Poet's ear.
 When these enchanted portals open wide,
 And through the light the horsemen swiftly glide,

EPISTLES

The Poet's eye can reach those golden halls,
And view the glory of their festivals
Their ladies fair, that in the distance seem
Fit for the silv'ring of a seraph's dream;
Their rich brimm'd goblets, that incessant run
Like the bright spots that move about the sun;
And, when upheld, the wine from each bright jar
Pours with the lustre of a falling star.
Yet further off, are dimly seen their bowers,
Of which, no mortal eye can reach the flowers;
And 'tis right just, for well Apollo knows
'Twould make the Poet quarrel with the rose.
All that's reveal'd from that far seat of blisses,
Is, the clear fountains' interchanging kisses,
As gracefully descending, light and thin,
Like silver streaks across a dolphin's fin,
When he upswimmeth from the coral caves,
And sports with half his tail above the waves.

These wonders strange he sees, and many more,
Whose head is pregnant with poetic lore.
Should he upon an evening ramble fare
With forehead to the soothing breezes bare,
Would he naught see but the dark, silent blue,
With all its diamonds trembling through and through?
Or the coy moon, when in the waviness
Of whitest clouds she does her beauty dress,
And staidly paces higher up, and higher,
Like a sweet nun in holiday attire?
Ah, yes! much more would start into his sight—
The revelries and mysteries of night:
And should I ever see them, I will tell you
Such tales as needs must with amazement spell you.

These are the living pleasures of the bard:
But richer far posterity's award.
What does he murmur with his latest breath,
While his proud eye looks through the film of death?

And warm thy sons !' Ah, my dear friend and brother,
Could I, at once, my mad ambition smother,
For tasting joys like these, sure I should be
Happier, and dearer to society.

At times, 'tis true, I've felt relief from pain
When some bright thought has darted through my
brain.

Through all that day I've felt a greater pleasure
Than if I'd brought to light a-hidden treasure.

As to my sonnets, though none else should heed
them,

I feel delighted, still, that you should read them.

Of late, too, I have had much calm enjoyment,

Stretch'd on the grass at my best lov'd employment
Of scribbling lines for you. These things I thought
While, in my face, the freshest breeze I caught.

E'en now I'm pillow'd on a bed of flowers

That crowns a lofty cliff, which proudly towers

Above the ocean waves. The stalks, and blades,

Chequer my tablet with their quivering shades.

On one side is a field of drooping oats,

Through which the poppies show their scarlet coats,

So pert and useless, that they bring to mind

The scarlet coats that pester human-kind.

And on the other side, 'outspread, is seen

Ocean's blue mantle streak'd with purple and green.

Now 'tis I see a canvas'd ship, and now

Mark the bright silver curling round her prow.

I see the lark down-dropping to his nest,

And the broad winged sea-gull never at rest ;

For when no more he spreads his feathers free,

His breast is dancing on the restless sea.

Now I direct my eyes into the west,

Which at this moment is in sunbeams drest :

Why westward turn ? 'Twas but to say adieu !

'Twas but to kiss my hand, dear George, to you !

Who had beheld Belphebe in a brook,
 And lovely Una in a leafy nook,
 And Archimago leaning o'er his book :
 Who had of all that's sweet tasted, and seen,
 From silv'ry ripple, up to beauty's queen ;
 From the sequester'd haunts of gay Titania,
 To the blue dwelling of divine Urania :
 One, who, of late, had ta'en sweet forest walks
 With him who elegantly chats, and talks—
 The wrong'd Libertas,—who has told you stories
 Of laurel chaplets, and Apollo's glory ;
 Of troops chivalrous prancing through a city,
 And tearful ladies made for love, and pity :
 With many else which I have never known.
 Thus have I thought ; and days on days have flown
 Slowly, or rapidly,—unwilling still
 For you to try my dull, unlearned quill.
 Nor should I now, but that I've known you long ;
 That you first taught me all the sweets of song :
 The grand, the sweet, the terse, the free, the fine ;
 What swell'd with pathos, and what right divine :
 Spenserian vowels that elope with ease,
 And float along like birds o'er summer seas ;
 Miltonian storms, and more, Miltonian tenderness ;
 Michael in arms, and more, meek Eve's fair slender-
 ness.

Who read for me the sonnet swelling loudly
 Up to its climax and then dying proudly ?
 Who found for me the grandeur of the ode,
 Growing, like Atlas, stronger from its load ?
 Who let me taste that more than cordial dram,
 The sharp, the rapier-pointed epigram ?
 Show'd me that epic was of all the king,
 Round, vast, and spanning all like Saturn's ring ?
 You too upheld the veil from Clio's beauty,
 And pointed out the patriot's stern duty ;
 The might of Alfred, and the shaft of Tell ;
 The hand of Brutus, that so gladly fell

But many days have passed since last my heart
Was warm'd luxuriously by divine Mozart ;
By Arne delighted, or by Handel madden'd ;
Or by the song of Erin pierc'd and sadden'd :
What time you were before the music sitting,
And the rich notes to each sensation fitting.
Since I have walk'd with you through shady lanes
That freshly terminate in open plains,
And revell'd in a chat that ceased not
When, at night-fall, among your books we got :
No, nor when supper came, nor after that,—
Nor when reluctantly I took my hat ;
No, nor till cordially you shook my hand
Mid-way between our homes :—your accents bland
Still sounded in my ears, when I no more
Could hear your footsteps touch the gravelly floor.
Sometimes I lost them, and then found again ;
You chang'd the footpath for the grassy plain.
In those still moments I have wish'd you joys
That well you know to honour :—' Lite's very toys
' With him,' said I, ' will take a pleasant charm ;
' It cannot be that aught will work him harm.'
These thoughts now come o'er me with all their
might —
Again I shake your hand,—friend Charles, good-night.

SONNETS

I

TO MY BROTHER GEORGE

MANY the wonders I this day have seen :
The sun, when first he kist away the tears
That fill'd the eyes of Morn ;—the laurell'd peers
Who from the feathery gold of evening lean ;—
The Ocean with its vastness, its blue green,
Its ships, its rocks, its caves, its hopes, its fears,—
Its voice mysterious, which whoso hears
Must think on what will be, and what has been.
E'en now, dear George, while this for you I write,
Cynthia is from her silken curtains peeping
So scantily, that it seems her bridal night,
And she her half-discover'd revels keeping.
But what, without the social thought of thee,
Would be the wonders of the sky and sea ?

II

TO —

HAD I a man's fair form, then might my sighs
Be echoed swiftly through that ivory shell
Thine ear, and find thy gentle heart ; so well
Would passion arm me for the enterprise :
But ah ! I am no knight whose foeman dies ;
No cuirass glistens on my bosom's swell ;
I am no happy shepherd of the dell
Whose lips have trembled with a maiden's eyes.
Yet must I dote upon thee,—call thee sweet,
Sweeter by far than Hybla's honeyed roses

When steep'd in dew rich to intoxication.
 Ah! I will taste that dew, for me 'tis meet,
 And when the moon her pallid face discloses,
 I'll gather some by spells, and incantation.

III

WRITTEN ON THE DAY THAT MR LEIGH
 HUNT LEFT PRISON

WHAT though, for showing truth to flatter'd state,
 Kind Hunt was shut in prison, yet has he,
 In his immortal spirit, been as free
 As the sky-searching lark, and as elate.
 Mimon of grandeur! think you he did wait?
 Think you he naught but prison walls did see,
 Till, so unwilling, thou unturn'dst the key?
 Ah, no! far happier, nobler was his fate!
 In Spenser's halls he stray'd; and bowers fair,
 Culling enchanted flowers; and he flew
 With daring Milton through the fields of air:
 To regions of his own his genius true
 Took happy flights. Who shall his fame impair
 When thou art dead, and all thy wretched crew?

IV

How many bards gild the lapses of time!
 A few of them have ever been the food
 Of my delighted fancy,—I could brood
 Over their beauties, earthly, or sublime:
 And often, when I sit me down to rhyme,
 These will in throngs before my mind intrude:
 But no confusion, no disturbance rude
 Do they occasion; 'tis a pleasing chime.

o the unnumber'd sounds that evening store ;
 The songs of birds—the whisp'ring of the leaves—
 The voice of waters—the great bell that heaves
 With solemn sound,—and thousand others more,
 That distance of recognisance bereaves,
 Make pleasing music, and not wild uproar.

v

TO A FRIEND WHO SENT ME SOME ROSES

As late I rambled in the happy fields,
 What time the sky-lark shakes the tremulous dew
 From his lush clover covert ;—when anew
 Adventurous knights take up their dinted shields :
 I saw the sweetest flower wild nature yields,
 A fresh-blown musk-rose ; 'twas the first that threw
 Its sweets upon the summer . graceful it grew
 As is the wand that queen Titania wields.
 And, as I feasted on its fragrancy,
 I thought the garden-rose it far excell'd :
 But when, O Wells ' thy roses came to me
 My sense with their deliciousness was spell'd :
 Soft voices had they, that with tender plea
 Whisper'd of peace, and truth, and friendliness
 unquell'd.

vi

TO G A W.

NYMPH or the downward smile and sidelong glance !
 In what diviner moments of the day
 Art thou most lovely ?—when gone far astray
 Into the labyrinths of sweet utterance,
 Or when serenely wand'ring in a trance
 Of sober thought ' Or when starting away

With careless robe to meet the morning ray
Thou sparest the flowers in thy mazy dance?
Haply 'tis when thy ruby lips part sweetly,
And so remain, because thou listenest.
But thou to please wert nurtured so completely
That I can never tell what mood is best.
I shall as soon pronounce which Grace more neatly
Trips it before Apollo than the rest.

VII

O SOLITUDE! if I must with thee dwell,
Let it not be among the jumbled heap
Of murky buildings; climb with me the steep,—
Nature's observatory—whence the dell,
Its flowery slopes, its river's crystal swell,
May seem a span; let me thy vigils keep
'Mongst boughs pavilion'd, where the deer's swi
leap
Startles the wild bee from the fox-glove bell.
But though I'll gladly trace these scenes with thee
Yet the sweet converse of an innocent mind,
Whose words are images of thoughts refined,
Is my soul's pleasure, and it sure must be
Almost the highest bliss of human-kind,
When to thy haunts two kindred spirits flee.

VIII

TO MY BROTHERS

SMALL, busy flames play through the fresh-laid coal;
And their faint cracklings o'er our silence creep
Like whispers of the household gods that keep
A gentle empire o'er fraternal souls.

nd while, for rhymes, I search around the poles,
 Your eyes are fix'd, as in poetic sleep,
 Upon the lore so voluble and deep,
 That aye at fall of night our care condoes.
 This is your birthday, Tom, and I rejoice
 That thus it passes smoothly, quietly :
 Many such eves of gently whisp'ring noise
 May we together pass, and calmly try
 What are this world's true joys,—eie the great voice,
 From its fair face shall bid our spirits fly.

IX

KREN fitful gusts are whispering here and there
 Among the bushes, half leafless, and dry ;
 The stars look very cold about the sky,
 And I have many miles on foot to fare.
 Yet feel I little of the cool bleak air,
 Or of the dead leaves rustling drearily,
 Or of those silver lamps that burn on high,
 Or of the distance from home's pleasant lair :
 For I am brimful of the friendliness
 That in a little cottage I have found ;
 Of fair-hair'd Milton's eloquent distress,
 And all his love for gentle Lycid drown'd ;
 Of lovely Laura in her light green dress,
 And faithful Petrarch gloriously crown'd.

X

To one who has been long in city pent,
 'Tis very sweet to look into the fair
 And open face of heaven,—to breathe a prayer
 Full in the smile of the blue firmament.

Who is more happy, when, with heart's content,
Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair
Of wavy grass, and reads a debonaire
And gentle tale of love and languishment?
Returning home at evening, with an ear
Catching the notes of Philomel,—an eye
Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright career,
He mourns that day so soon has glided by:
E'en like the passage of an angel's tear
That falls through the clear ether silently.

XI

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S
'HOMER'

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He star'd at the Pacific—and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

XII

ON LEAVING SOME FRIENDS AT AN
EARLY HOUR

GIVE me a golden pen, and let me lean
 On heap'd-up flowers, in regions clear, and far;
 Bring me a tablet whiter than a star.
 Or hand of hymning angel, when 'tis seen
 The silver strings of heavenly harp atween:
 And let there glide by many a pearly car,
 Pink robes, and wavy hair, and diamond jar,
 And half-discovered wings, and glances keen.
 The while let music wander round my ears,
 And as it reaches each delicious ending,
 Let me write down a line of glorious tone,
 And full of many wonders of the spheres:
 For what a height my spirit is contending!
 'Tis not content so soon to be alone.

- XIII

ADDRESSED TO HAYDON

HIGH-MINDEDNESS, a jealousy for good,
 A loving-kindness for the great man's fame,
 Dwells here and there with people of no name,
 In noisome alley, and in pathless wood:
 And where we think the truth least understood,
 Oft may be found a 'singleness of aim,'
 That ought to frighten into hooded shame
 A money-mong'ring, pitiable brood.

How glorious this affection for the cause
Of steadfast genius, toiling gallantly !
What when a 'stout unbending champion awes
Envy, and Malice to their native sty ?
Unnumber'd souls breathe out a still applause,
Proud to behold him in his country's eye.

XIV

ADDRESSED TO THE SAME

GRÉAT spirits now on earth are sojourning ;
He of the cloud, the cataract, the lake,
Who on Helvellyn's summit, wide awake,
Catchè's his freshness from Archangel's wing :
He of the rose, the violet, the spring,
-The social smile, the chain for Freedom's sake :
And lo !—whose steadfastness would never take
A meaner sound than Raphael's whispering.
And other spirits there are standing apart
Upon the forehead of the age to come ;
These, these will give the world another heart,
And other pulses Hear ye not the hum
Of mighty workings ?——
Listen awhile, ye nations, and be dumb.

XV

ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND CRICKET

THE poetry of earth is never dead :
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run,
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead ;

XVII

HAPPY is England ! I could be content
To see no other verdure than its own ;
To feel no other breezes than are blown
Through its tall woods with high romances blent :
Yet do I sometimes feel a languishment
For skies Italian, and an inward groan
To sit upon an Alp as on a throne,
And half forget what world or worldling meant.
Happy is England, sweet her artless daughters ;
Enough their simple loveliness for me,
Enough their whitest arms in silence clinging :
Yet do I often warmly burn to see
Beauties of deeper glance, and hear their singing,
And float with them about the summer waters.

SLEEP AND POETRY

'As I lay in my bed slepe full unmete
'Was unto me, but why that I ne might
'Rest I ne wist, for there n'as erthly wight
'(As I suppose) had more of herlis cse
'Than I, for I n'ad sicknesse nor dise.''

CHAUCER.

WHAT is more gentle than a wind in summer?
What is more soothing than the pretty hummer
That stays one moment in an open flower,
And buzzes cheerily from bowel to bower?
What is more tranquil than a musk-rose blowing
In a green island, far from all men's knowing?
More healthful than the leafiness of dales?
More secret than a nest of nightingales?
More serene than Cordelia's countenance?
More full of visions than a high romance?
What, but thee, Sleep? Soft closer of our eyes!
Low murmurer of tender lullabies!
Light hoverer around our happy pillows!
Wreather of poppy buds, and weeping willows!
Silent entangler of a beauty's tresses!
Most happy listener! when the morning blesses
Thee for enlivening all the cheerful eyes
That glance so brightly at the new sunrise.

But what is higher beyond thought than thee?
Fresher than berries of a mountain-tree?
More strange, more beautiful, more smooth, more regal,
Than wings of swans, than doves, than dim seen
eagle?
What is it? And to what shall I compare it?
It has a glory, and naught else can share it.
The thought thereof is awful, sweet, and holy,
Chasing away all worldliness and folly;

Coming sometimes like fearful claps of thunder,
Or the low rumblings earth's regions under ;
And sometimes like a gentle whispering
Of all the secrets of some wond'rous thing
That breathes about us in the vacant air ;
So that we look around with prying stare,
Perhaps to see shapes of light, aerial limning,
And catch soft floatings from a faint-heard hymning ;
To see the laurel-wreath, on high suspended,
That is to crown our name when life is ended.
Sometimes it gives a glory to the voice,
And from the heart up-springs, rejoice ! rejoice !
Sounds which will reach the Framers of all things,
And die away in ardent mutterings.

No one who once the glorious sun has seen,
And all the clouds, and felt his bosom clean
For his great Maker's presence, but must know
What 'tis I mean, and feel his being glow :
Therefore no insult will I give his spirit,
By telling what he sees from native merit.

O Poesy ! for thee I hold my pen
That am not yet a glorious denizen
Of thy wide heaven—should I rather kneel
Upon some mountain-top until I feel
A glowing splendour round about me hung,
And echo back the voice of thine own tongue ?
O Poesy ! for thee I grasp my pen
That am not yet a glorious denizen
Of thy wide heaven ; yet, to my ardent prayer,
Yield from thy sanctuary some clear air,
Smooth'd for intoxication by the breath
Of flowering bays, that I may die a death
Of luxury, and my young spirit follow
The morning sunbeams to the great Apollo
Like a fresh sacrifice, or, if I can bear
The o'erwhelming sweets, 'twill bring to me the fai

Visions of all places · a bowery nook
 Will be Elysium—an eternal book
 Whence I may copy many a lovely saying
 About the leaves, and flowers—about the playing
 Of nymphs in woods, and fountains ; and the shade
 Keeping a silence round a sleeping maid ;
 And many a verse from so strange influence
 That we must ever wonder how, and whence
 It came. Also imaginings will hover
 Round my fireside, and haply there discover
 Vistas of solemn beauty, where I'd wander
 In happy silence, like the clear Meander
 Through its lone vales ; and where I found a spot
 Of awfuller shade, or an enchanted grot,
 Or a green hill o'erspread with chequer'd dress
 Of flowers, and fearful from its loveliness,
 Write on my tablets all that was permitted,
 All that was for our human senses fitted
 - Then the events of this wide world I'd seize
 Like a strong giant, and my spirit tease
 Till at its shoulders it should proudly see
 Wings to find out an immortality.

Stop and consider ' life is but a day ;
 A fragile dewdrop on its perilous way
 From a tree's summit , a poor Indian's sleep
 While his boat hastens to the monstrous sleep
 Of Montmorenci. Why so sad a moan ?
 Life is the rose's hope while yet unblown ;
 The reading of an ever-changing tale ;
 The light uplifting of a maiden's veil ;
 A pigeon tumbling in clear summer air ,
 A laughing schoolboy, without grief or care,
 Riding the springy branches of an elm.

O for ten years, that I may overwhelm
 Myself in poesy ; so I may do the deed
 That my own soul has to itself decreed.

Then I will pass the countries that I see
In long perspective, and continually
Taste their pure fountains. First the realm I'll pass
Of Flora, and old Pan : sleep in the grass,
Feed upon apples red, and strawberries,
And choose each pleasure that my fancy sees ;
Catch the white-handed nymphs in shady places,
To woo sweet kisses from averted faces,—
Play with their fingers, touch their shoulders white
Into a pretty shrinking with a bite
As hard as lips can make it : till agreed,
A lovely tale of human life we'll read,
And one will teach a tame dove how it best
May fan the cool air gently o'er my rest ;
Another, bending o'er her nimble tread,
Will set a green robe floating round her head,
And still will dance with ever-varied ease,
Smiling upon the flowers and the trees .
Another will entice me on, and on
Through almond blossoms and rich cinnamon ;
Till in the bosom of a leafy world
We rest in silence, like two gems upcurl'd
In the recesses of a pearly shell.

And can I ever bid these joys farewell ?
Yes, I must pass them for a nobler life,
Where I may find the agonies, the strife
Of human hearts : for lo ! I see afar,
O'er-sailing the blue craginess, a car
And steeds with creamy manes—the charioteer
Looks out upon the winds with glorious fear :
And now the numerous trappings quiver lightly
Along a huge cloud's ridge ; and now with sprightly
Wheel downward come they into fresher skies,
Tipt round with silver from the sun's bright eyes.
Still downward with capacious whirl they glide ;
And now I see them on a green hill-side

In breezy rest among the nodding stalks
 The charioteer with wondrous gesture talks
 To the trees and mountains ; and there soon appear
 Shapes of delight, of mystery, and fear,
 Passing along before a dusky space
 Made by some mighty oaks · as they would chase
 Some ever-fleeting music, on they sweep.
 Lo ! how they murmur, laugh, and smile, and weep :
 Some with upholden hand and mouth severe ;
 Some with their faces muffled to the ear
 Between their arms , some, clear in youthful bloom,
 Go glad and smilingly athwart the gloom ,
 Some looking back, and some with upward gaze ;
 Yes, thousands in a thousand different ways
 Flit onward—now a lovely wreath of girls
 Dancing their sleek hair into tangled curls ;
 And now broad wings Most awfully intent
 The driver of those steeds is forward bent,
 And seems to listen . O that I might know
 All that he writes with such a hurrying glow.

The visions all are fled—the car is fled
 Into the light of heaven, and in their stead
 A senses of real things comes doubly strong,
 And, like a muddy stream, would bear along
 My soul to nothingness · but I will strive
 Against all doubtings, and will keep alive
 The thought of that same chariot, and the strange
 Journey it went.

Is there so small a range
 In the present strength of manhood, that the high
 Imagination cannot freely fly
 As she was wont of old ? prepare her steeds,
 Paw up against the light, and do strange deeds
 Upon the clouds ? Has she not shown us all ?
 From the clear space of ether, to the small
 Breath of new buds unfolding ? From the meaning
 Of Jove's large eyebrow, to the tender greening

Of April meadows? Here her altar shone,
E'en in this isle; and who could paragon
The fervid choir that lifted up a noise
Of harmony, to where it aye will poise
Its mighty self of convoluting sound,
Hugē as a planet, and like that roll round,
Eternally-around a dizzy void?
Ay, in those days the Muses were nigh cloy'd
With honours; nor had any other care
Than to sing out and sooth their wavy hair.

Could all this be forgotten? Yes, a schism
Nurtured by foppery and barbarism,
Made great Apollo blush for this his land
Men were thought wise who could not understand
His glories: with a puling infant's force
They sway'd about upon a rocking-horse,
And thought it Pegasus. Ah dismal-soul'd!
The winds, of heaven-blew, the ocean roll'd
Its gathering waves—ye felt it not. The blue
Bared its eternal bosom, and the dew
Of summer nights collected still to make
The morning precious: Beauty was awake!
Why were ye not awake? But ye were dead
To things ye knew not of,—were closely wed
To musty laws lined out with wretched rule
And compass vile: so that ye taught a school
Of dolts to smooth, inlay, and clip, and fit,
Till, like the certain wands of Jacob's wit,
Their verses talk'd. Easy was the task.
A thousand handicraftsmen wore the mask
Of Poesy. Ill-fated, impious race!
That blasphemed the bright Lyrist to his face,
And did not know it,—no, they went about,
Holding a poor, decrepid standard-out
Mark'd with most flimsy mottoes, and in large
The name of one Boileau!

O ye whose charge

It is to hover round our pleasant hills !
 Whose congregated majesty so fills
 My boundly reverence, that I cannot trace
 Your hallowed names, in this unholy place,
 So near those common folk ; did not their shames
 Affright you ? Did our old lamenting Thames
 Delight you ? Did ye never cluster round
 Delicious Avon, with a mournful sound,
 And weep ? Or did ye wholly bid adieu
 To regions where no more the laurel grew ?
 Or did ye stay to give a welcoming
 To some lone spirits who could proudly sing
 Their youth away, and die ? 'Twas even so :
 But let me think away those times of woe .
 Now 'tis a fauer season ; ye have breathed
 Rich benedictions o'er us , ye have wreathed
 Fresh garlands : for sweet music has been heard
 In many places ; some has been upstirr'd
 From out its crystal dwelling in a lake,
 By a swan's ebon bill , from a thick brake,
 Nested and quiet in a valley mild,
 Bubbles a pipe ; fine sounds are floating wild
 About the earth : happy are ye and glād
 These things are, doubtless : yet in truth we've
 had

Strange thunders from the potency of song ;
 Mingled indeed with what is sweet and strong,
 From majesty : but in clear truth the themes
 Are ugly cubs, the Poets' Polyphemes
 Disturbing the grand sea A drainless shower
 Of light is poesy ; 'tis the supreme of power ;
 'Tis might half slumb'ring on its own right arm.
 The very archings of her eyelids charm
 A thousand willing agents to obey,
 And still she governs with the mildest sway :
 But strength alone though of the Muses born
 Is like a fallen angel trees upturn,

Darkness, and worms, and shrouds, and sepulchres
Delight it ; for it feeds upon the burrs,
And thorns of life ; forgetting the great end
Of poesy, that it should be a friend
To sooth the cares, and lift the thoughts of man.

Yet I rejoice : a myrtle fairer than
E'er grew in Paphos, from the bitter weeds
Lifts its sweet head into the air, and feeds
A silent space with ever-sprouting green.
All tenderest birds there find a pleasant screen,
Creep through the shade with jaunty fluttering,
Nibble the little cupped flowers and sing.
Then let us clear away the choking thorns
From round its gentle stem ; let the young fawns,
Yeaned in after-times, when we are flown,
Find a fresh sward beneath it, overgrown
With simple flowers : let there nothing be
More boisterous than a lover's bended knee ;
Nought more ungentle than the placid look
Of one who leans upon a closed book ;
Nought more untroubled than the grassy slopes
Between two hills : All hail, delightful hopes !
As she was wont, th' imagination
Into most lovely labyrinths will be gone,
And they shall be accounted poet kings
Who simply tell the most heart-easing things.
O may these joys be ripe before I die !

Will not some say that I presumptuously
Have spoken ? that from hastening disgrace
'Twere better far to hide my foolish face ?
That whining boyhood should with reverence bow
Ere the dread thunderbolt could reach ? How !
If I do hide myself, it sure shall be
In the very fane, the light of Poesy :
If I do fall, at least I will be laid
Beneath the silence of a poplar shade ;

And over me the grass shall be smooth shaven ;
 And there shall be a kind memorial graven.
 But off, Despondence ! miserable bane '
 They should not know thee, who athirst to gain-
 A noble end, are thirsty every hour
 What though I am not wealthy in the dower
 Of spanning wisdom ; though I do not know
 The shiftings of the mighty winds that blow
 Hither and thither all the changing thoughts
 Of man . though no great ministering reason sorts
 Out the dark mysteries of human souls
 To clear conceiving . yet there ever rolls
 A vast idea before me, and I glean
 Therefrom my liberty ; thence too I've seen
 The end and aim of Poesy 'Tis clear
 As anything most true ; as that the year
Is made of the four seasons—manifest
 As a large cross, some old cathedral's crest,
 Lifted to the white clouds Therefore should I
 Be but the essence of deformity,
 A coward, did my very eyelids wink
 At speaking out what I have dared to think.
 Ah ! rather let me like a madman run
 Over some precipice ; let the hot sun
 Melt my Dedalian wings, and drive me down
 Convuls'd and headlong ! Stay ! an inward frown
 Of conscience bids me be more calm awhile
 An ocean dim, sprinkled with many an isle,
 Spreads awfully before me. How much toil !
 How many days ! what desperate turmoil !
 Ere I can have explored its widenesses.
 Ah, what a task ! upon my bended knees,
 I could unsay those—no, impossible !
 Impossible !

For sweet relief I'll dwell
 On humbler thoughts, and let this strange assay
 Begun in gentleness die so away.

E'en now all tumult from my bosom fades :
I turn full-hearted to the friendly aids
That smooth the path of honour ; brotherhood,
And friendliness the nurse of mutual good.
The hearty grasp that sends a pleasant sonnet
Into the brain ere one can think upon it ;
The silence when some rhymes are coming out ;
And when they're come, the very pleasant rout .
The message certain to be done to-morrow.
'Tis perhaps as well that it should be to borrow
Some precious book from out its snug retreat,
To cluster round it when we next shall meet.
Scarce can I scribble on, for lovely airs
Are fluttering round the room like doves in pairs ;
Many delights of that glad day recalling,
When first my senses caught their tender falling.
And with these airs come forms of elegance
Stooping their shoulders o'er a horse's prance,
Careless, and grand—fingers soft and round
Parting luxuriant curls ; and the swift bound
Of Bacchus from his chariot, when his eye
Made Ariadne's cheek look blushinglly.
Thus I remember all the pleasant flow
Of words at opening a portfolio.

Things such as these are ever harbingers .
To trains of peaceful images : the stir
Of a swan's neck unseen among the rushes :
A linnet starting all about the bushes :
A butterfly, with golden wings broad-parted,
Nestling a rose, convuls'd as though it smarted
With over-pleasure—many, many more,
Might I indulge at large in all my store
Of luxuries : yet I must not forget
Sleep, quiet with his poppy coronet :
For what there may be worthy in these rhymes
I partly owe to him : and thus, the chimes
Of friendly voices had just given place
To as sweet a silence, when I 'gan retrace

The pleasant day, upon a couch at ease.
 It was a poet's house who keeps the keys
 Of pleasure's temple Round about were hung
 The glorious features of the bards who sung
 In other ages—cold and sacred busts
 Smiled at each other. Happy he who trusts
 To clear Futurity his darling fame !
 Then there were sauns and satyrs taking aim
 At swelling apples with a frisky leap
 And reaching fingers, 'mid a luscious heap
 Of vine-leaves. Then there rose to view a fane
 Of liney marbles and thereto a train
 Of nymphs-approaching fairly o'er the sward
 One, loveliest, holding her white hand toward
 The dazzling sunrise : two sisters sweet
 Bending their, graceful figures till they meet
 Over the trippings of a little child :
 And some are hearing, eagerly, the wild
 Thrilling liquidity of dewy piping.
 See, in another picture, nymphs are wiping
 Cherishingly Diana's timorous limbs ;—
 A fold of lawny mantle dabbling swims
 At the bath's edge, and keeps a gentle motion
 With the subsiding crystal as when ocean
 Heaving calmly its broad-swelling smoothness o'er
 Its rocky marge, and balances once more
 The patent weeds ; that now unshent by foam
 Feel all about their undulating home.
 Sappho's meek head was there half smiling down
 At nothing ; just as though the earnest frown
 Of over thinking had that moment gone
 From off her brow, and left her all alone.

Great Alfred's too, with anxious, pitying eyes,
 As if he always listened to the sighs
 Of the goaded world ; and Kosciusko's, worn
 By horrid sufrance—mightily forlorn.

Petrarch, outstepping from the shady green,
Starts at the sight of Laura; nor can wean
His eyes from her sweet face Most happy they !
For over them was seen a free display
Of outspread wings, and from between them shone
The face of Poesy : from off her throne
She overlook'd things that I scarce could tell.
The very sense of where I was might well
Keep Sleep aloof : but more than that there came
Thought after thought to nourish up the flame
Within my breast ; so that the morning light
Surprised me even from a sleepless night ;
And up I rose refresh'd, and glad, and gay,
Resolving to begin that very day
These lines ; and howsoever they be done,
I leave them as a father does his son.

ODE ON MELANCHOLY

I

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist
Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;
Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd
By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;
Make not your rosary of yew-berries,
Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
Your mournful Psychè, nor the downy owl
A partner in your sorrow's mysteries,
For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

II

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
And hides the green hill in an April shroud;
Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
Or on the wealth of globed pœonies;
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

III

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips.
Bidding adieu, and aching Pleasure nigh,
Turning to Poison while the bee-mouth sips:
Ay, in the very temple of delight
Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous
tongue
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;
His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

ENDYMION
A POETIC ROMANCE

The Stretched Metre of an Antique Song

Inscribed
TO THE MEMORY
OF
THOMAS CHATTERTON

PREFACE

KNOWING within myself the manner in which this Poem has been produced, it is not without a feeling of regret that I make it public

What manner I mean, will be quite clear to the reader, who must soon perceive great inexperience, immaturity, and every error denoting a feverish attempt, rather than a deed accomplished. The two first books, and indeed the two last, I feel sensible are not of such completion as to warrant their passing the press; nor should they if I thought a year's castigation would do them any good;—it will not. The foundations are too sandy. It is just that this youngster should die away: a sad thought for me, if I had not some hope that while it is dwindling I may be plotting, and fitting myself for verses fit to live.

This may be speaking too presumptuously, and may deserve a punishment: but no feeling man will be forward to inflict it: he will leave me alone, with the conviction that there is not a fiercer hell than the failure in a great object. This is not written with the least atom of purpose to forestall criticisms of course, but from the desire I have to conciliate men who are competent to look, and who do look with a zealous eye, to the honour of English literature

The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy ; but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted: thence proceeds mawkishness, and all the thousand-bitters which those men I speak of must necessarily taste in going over the following pages.

I hope I have not in too late a day touched the beautiful mythology of Greece, and dulled its brightness: for I wish to try once more, before I bid it farewell.

TRIGNMOUTH, *April 10, 1818.*

ENDYMION

BOOK I

A THING of beauty is a joy for ever : -
Its loveliness increases ; it will never
Pass into nothingness ; but still will keep ,
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
Made for our searching . yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep ; and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in ; and clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season ; the mid-forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms :
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms
We have imagined for the mighty dead ;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read :
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Nor do we merely feel these essences
For one short hour ; no, even as the trees
That whisper round a temple become soon
Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,
The passion poesy, glories infinite,
Haunt us till they become a cheering light

Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast,
That, whether there be shine, or gloom o'ercast,
They always must be with us, or we die.

Therefore, 'tis with full happiness that I
Will tracethe story of Endymion.
The very music of the name has gone
Into my being, and each pleasant scene
Is growing fresh before me as the green
Of our own valleys so I will begin
Now while I cannot hear the city's din ;
Now while the early budders are just new,
And run in mazes of the youngest hue
About old forests ; while the willow trails
Its delicate amber ; and the dairy pails
Bring home increase of milk. And, as the year
Grows lush in juicy stalks, I'll smoothly steer
My little boat, for many quiet hours,
With streams that deepen freshly into bowers.
Many and many a verse I hope to write,
Before the daisies, vermeil rimm'd and white,
Hide in deep herbage ; and ere yet the bees
Hum about globes of clover and sweet peas,
I must be near the middle of my story.
O may no wintry season, bare and hoary,
See it half finish'd : but let Autumn bold,
With universal tinge of sober gold,
Be all about me when I make an end.
And now at once, adventuresome, I send
My herald thought into a wilderness
There let its trumpet blow, and quickly dress
My uncertain path with green, that I may speed
Easily onward, thorough flowers and weed.

Upon the sides of Latmos was outspread
A mighty forest, for the moist earth fed
So plenteously all weed-hidden roots
Into o'erhanging boughs, and precious fruits.

And it had gloomy shades, sequestered deep,
 Where no man went ; and if from shepherd's keep
 A lamb stray'd far adown those inmost glens,
 Never again saw he the happy pens
 Whither his brethren, bleating with content,
 Over the hills at every nightfall went.
 Among the shepherds, 'twas believed ever,
 That not one fleecy lamb which thus did sever
 From the white flock, but pass'd unworried
 By any wolf, or pard with prying head,
 Until it came to some unfooted plains
 Where fed the herds of Pan : ay, great his gains
 Who thus one lamb did lose. Paths there were many,
 Winding through palmy fern, and rushes fenny,
 And ivy banks ; all leading pleasantly
 To a wide lawn, whence one could only see
 Stems thronging all around between the swell
 Of turf and slanting branches : who could tell
 The freshness of the space of heaven above,
 Edg'd round with dark tree-tops ? through which a
 dove

Would often beat its wings, and often too
 A little cloud would move across the blue.

Full in the middle of this pleasantness
 There stood a marble altar, with a tress
 Of flowers budded newly ; and the dew
 Had taken fairy phantasies to strew
 Daisies upon the sacred sward last eve,
 And so the dawned light in pomp receive.
 For 'twas the morn : Apollo's upward fire
 Made every eastern cloud a silvery pyre
 Of brightness so unsullied, that therein
 A melancholy spirit well might win
 Oblivion, and melt out his essence fine
 Into the winds : rain-scented eglantine
 Gave temperate sweets to that well-wooing sun ;
 The lark was lost in him ; cold-springs had run

To warm their chilliest bubbles in the grass ;
Man's voice was on the mountains ; and the mass
Of nature's lives and wonders pulsed tenfold,
To feel this sunrise and its glories old.

Now while the silent workings of the dawn
Were busiest, into that self-same lawn
All suddenly, with joyful cries, there sped
A troop of little children garlanded ;
Who gathering round the altar, seem'd to pry
Earnestly round as wishing to espy
Some folk of holiday : nor had they waited
For many moments, ere their ears were sated
With a faint breath of music, which ev'n then
Fill'd out its voice, and died away again
Within a little space again it gave
Its airy swellings, with a gentle wave,
To light-hung leaves, in smoothest echoes breaking
Through copse-clad valleys,—ere their death, o'ertaking
The surgy murmurs of the lonely sea.

And now, as deep into the wood as we
Might mark a lynx's eye, there glimmered light
Fair faces and a rush of garments white,
Plainer and plainer showing, till at last
Into the widest alley they all past,
Making directly for the woodland altar.
O kindly muse ! let not my weak tongue falter
In telling of this goodly company,
Of their old piety, and of their glee :
But let a portion of ethereal dew
Fall on my head, and presently unmew
My soul ; that I may dare, in wayfaring,
To stammer where old Chaucer us'd to sing.

Leading the way, young damsels danced along,
Bearing the burden of a shepherd's song ;
Each having a white wicker overbrimm'd
With April's tender younglings, next, well trimm'd,

A crowd of shepherds with as sunburnt looks
As may be read of in Arcadian books ;
Such as sat listening round Apollo's pipe,
When the great deity, for earth too ripe,
Let his divinity o'erflowing die
In music, through the vales of Thessaly :
Some idly trail'd their sheep-hooks on the ground,
And some kept up a shrilly mellow sound
With ebon-tipped flutes : close after these,
Now coming from beneath the forest trees,
A venerable priest full-soberly,
Begirt with ministering looks · always his eye
Steadfast upon the matted turf he kept,
And after him his sacred vestments swept
From his right hand there swung a vase, milk-white,
Of mingled wine, out-sparkling generous light ;
And in his left he held a basket full
Of all sweet herbs that searching eye could cull :
Wild thyme, and valley-lilies whiter still
Than Leda's love, and cresses from the rill.
His aged head, crowned with beechen wreath,
Seem'd like a poll of ivy in the teeth
Of winter hoar. Then came another crowd
Of shepherds, lifting in due time aloud
Their share of the ditty. After them appear'd,
Up-followed by a multitude that rear'd
Their voices to the clouds, a fair wrought car,
Easily rolling so 'as scarce to mar
The freedom of three steeds of dapple brown :
Who stood therein did seem of great renown
Among the throng. His youth was fully blown,
Showing like Ganymede to manhood grown ;
And, for those simple times, his garments were
A chieftain king's · beneath his breast, half bare,
Was hung a silver bugle, and between
His nervy knees there lay a boar-spear keen.
A smile was on his countenance ; he seem'd,
To common lookers on, like one who dream'd

Of idleness in groves Elysian ·
 But there were some who feelingly could scan
 A lurking trouble in his nether lip,
 And see that oftentimes the reins would slip
 Through his forgotten hands: then would they
 sigh,
 And think of yellow leaves, of owlets' cry,
 Of logs piled solemnly.—Ah, well-a-day,
 Why should our young Endymion pine away!

Soon the assembly, in a circle ranged,
 Stood silent round the shrine · each look was changed
 To sudden veneration · women meek
 Beckon'd their sons to silence; while each cheek
 Of virgin bloom paled gently for slight fear.
 Endymion too, without a forest-peer,
 Stood, wan and pale, and with an awed face;
 Among his brothers of the mountain chase
 In midst of all, the venerable priest
 yed them with joy from greatest to the least,
 nd, after lifting up his aged hands,
 hus spake he. 'Men of Latmos! shepherd bands!
 Whose care it is to guard a thousand flocks:
 Whether descended from beneath the rocks
 That overtop your mountains; whether come -
 From valleys where the pipe is never dumb,
 Or from your swelling downs, where sweet air stirs
 Blue harebells lightly, and where prickly furze
 Buds lavish gold, or-ye, whose precious charge
 Nibble their fill at ocean's very marge,
 Whose mellow reeds are touch'd with sounds forlorn
 By the dim echoes of old Triton's horn:
 Mothers and wives! who day by day prepare
 The scrip, with needments, for the mountain air;
 And all ye gentle girls who foster up
 Udderless lambs, and in a little cup
 Will put choice honey for a favoured youth:
 Yea, every one attend! for in good truth

Our vows are wanting to our great god Pan.
Are not our lowing heifers sleeker than
Night-swollen mushrooms? Are not our wide plains
Speckled with countless fleeces? Have not rains
Green'd over April's lap? No howling sad
Sickens our fearful ewes; and we have had
Great bounty from Endymion our lord.
The earth is glad: the merry lark has pour'd
His early song against yon breezy sky,
That spreads so clear o'er our solemnity.'

Thus ending, on the shrine he heap'd a spire
Of teeming sweets, enkindling sacred fire;
Anon he stain'd the thick and spongy sod
With wine, in honour of the shepherd-god.
Now while the earth was drinking it, and while
Bay leaves were crackling in the fragrant pile.
And gummy frankincense was sparkling bright
'Neath smothering parsley, and a hazy light
Spread grayly eastward, thus a chorus sang:

'O THOU, whose mighty palace roof doth hang
From jagged trunks, and overshadoweth
Eternal whispers, glooms, the birth, life, death
Of unseen flowers in heavy peacefulness;
Who lov'st to see the hamadryads dress
Their ruffled locks where meeting hazels darken;
And through whole solemn hours dost sit, and hearken
The dreary melody of bedded reeds—
In desolate places, where dank moisture breeds
The pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth;
Bethinking thee, how melancholy loth
Thou wast to lose fair Syrinx—do thou now,
By thy love's milky brow!
By all the trembling mazes that she ran,
Hear us, great Pan!

'O thou, for whose soul-soothing quiet, turtles
Passion their voices cooingly 'mong myrtles,

What time thou wanderest at eventide
Through sunny meadows, that outskirts the side
Of thine enmossed realms . O thou, to whom
Broad-leaved fig-trees even now foredoom
Their ripen'd fruitage ; -yellow-girted bees
Their golden honeycombs ; our village leas
Their fairest blossom'd beans and popped corn ;
The chuckling linnet its five young unborn,
To sing for thee , low creeping strawberries
Their summer coolness , pent-up butterflies
Their freckled wings ; yea, the fresh budding year
All its completions—be quickly near,
By every wind that nods the mountain pine,
O forester divine !

‘Thou, to whom every faun and satyr flies
For willing service ; whether to surprise
The squatted hare while in half sleeping fit ;
Or upward ragged precipices flit
To save poor lambkins from the eagle's maw ;
Or by mysterious enticement draw
Bewildered shepherds to their path again ;
Or to tread breathless round the frothy main,
And gather up all fancifullest shells
For thee to tumble into Naiads' cells,
And, being hidden, laugh at their outpeeping ;
Or to delight thee with fantastic leaping,
The while they pelt each other on the crown
With silvery oak apples, and fir-cones brown—
By all the echoes that about thee ring,
Hear us, O satyr king !

‘O Harkener to the loud-clapping shears
While ever and anon to his shorn peers
A ram goes bleating . Winder of the horn,
When snouted wild-boars routing tender corn
Anger our huntsman : Breather round our farms,
To keep off mildews, and all weather harms

Strange ministrant of undescribed sounds,
That come a-swooning over hollow grounds,
And wither drearily on barren moors :
Dread opener of the mysterious doors
Leading to universal knowledge—see,
Great son of Dryope,
The many that are come to pay their vows
With leaves about their brows !

‘ Be still the unimaginable lodge
For solitary thinkings ; such as dodge
Conception to the very bourne of heaven,
Then leave the naked brain - be still the leaven,
That spreading in this dull and clodded earth
Gives it a touch ethereal—a new birth :
Be still a symbol of immensity ;
A firmament reflected in a sea ;
An element filling the space between ;
An unknown—but no more we humbly screen
With uplift hands our foreheads, lowly bending,
And giving out a shout most heaven-rending,
Conjure thee to receive our humble Pæan,
Upon thy Mount Lycean !’

Even while they brought the burden to a close,
A shout from the whole multitude arose,
That lingered in the air like dying rolls -
Of abrupt thunder, when Ionian shoals
Of dolphins bob their noses through the brine.
Meantime, on shady levels, mossy fine,
Young companies nimbly began dancing
To the swift treble pipe, and humming string.
Ay, those fair living forms swam heavenly
To tunes forgotten—out of memory :
Fair creatures ! whose young children's children bred
Thermopylae its heroes—not yet dead,
But in old marbles ever beautiful.
High genitors, unconscious did they cull

Time's sweet-first-fruits—they danc'd to weariness,
And then in quiet circles did they press
The hillock turf, and caught the latter end
Of some strange history, potent to send
A young mind from its bodily tenement.
Or they might watch the quoit-pitchers, intent
On either side; pitying the sad death
Of Hyacinthus, when the cruel breath
Of Zephyr slew him,—Zephyr penitent,
Who now, ere Phœbus mounts the firmament,
Fondles the flower amid the sobbing rain.
The archers too, upon a wider plain,
Beside the feathery whizzing of the shaft,
And the dull twanging bowstring, and the raft
Branch down sweeping from a tall ash-top,
Call'd up a thousand thoughts to envelope
Those who would watch. Perhaps, the trembling knee
And frantic gape of lonely Niobe,
Poor, lonely Niobe! when her lovely young
Were dead and gone, and her caressing tongue
Lay a lost thing upon her paly lip,
And very, very deadliness did nip
Her motherly cheeks. Arous'd from this sad mood
By one, who at a distance loud halloo'd,
Uplifting his strong bow into the air,
Many might after brighter visions stare:
After the Argonauts, in blind amaze
Tossing about on Neptune's restless ways,
Until, from the horizon's vaulted side,
There shot a golden splendour far and wide,
Spangling those million poutings of the brine
With quivering ore: 'twas even an awful shine
From the exaltation of Apollo's bow;—
A heavenly beacon in their dreary woe
Who thus were ripe for high contemplating,
Might turn their steps towards the sober ring
Where sat Endymion and the aged priest.
'Mong shepherds gone in eld, whose looks increas'd

The silvery setting of their mortal star.
There they discours'd upon the fragile bar
That keeps us from our homes ethereal ;
And what our duties there to nightly call
Vesper, the beauty-crest of summer weather ;
To summon all the downiest clouds together
For the sun's purple couch ; to emulate
In ministering the potent rule of fate
With speed of fire-tail'd exhalations ;
To tint her pallid cheek with bloom, who cons
Sweet poesy by moonlight : besides these,
A world of other unguess'd offices.
Anon they wander'd, by divine converse,
Into Elysium ; vying to rehearse
Each one his own anticipated bliss.
One felt heart-certain that he could not miss
His quick gone love, among fair blossom'd boughs,
Where every zephyr-sigh pouts, and endows
Her lips with music for the welcoming
Another wish'd, 'mid that eternal-spring,
To meet his rosy child, with feathery sails,
Sweeping, eye-earnestly, through almond vales :
Who, suddenly, should stoop through the smooth wind,
And with the balmiest leaves his temples bind ;
And, ever after, through those regions be
His messenger, his little Mercury.
Some were athirst in soul to see again
Their fellow-huntsmen o'er the wide champaign
In times long past ; to sit with them, and talk
Of all the chances in their earthly walk ;
Comparing, joyfully, their plenteous stores
Of happiness, to when upon the moors,
Benighted, close they huddled from the cold,
And shar'd their famish'd scrips Thus all out-told
Their fond imaginations,—saving him
Whose eyelids curtain'd up their jewels dim,
Endymion yet hourly had he striven
To hide the cankered venom, that had riven

Her playmates, with their needle broidery,
And minstrel memories of times gone by.

So she was gently glad to see him laid
Under her favourite bower's quiet shade,
On her own couch, new made of flower leaves,
Dried carefully on the cooler side of sheaves
When last the sun his autumn tresses shook,
And the tann'd harvesters rich armfuls took.
Soon was he quieted to slumbrous rest :
But, ere it crept upon him, he had prest
Peona's busy hand against his lips,
And still, a-sleeping, held her finger-tips
In tender pressure. And as a willow keeps
A patient watch over the stream that creeps
Windingly by it, so the quiet maid
Held her in peace : so that a whispering blade
Of grass, a wailful gnat, a bee bustling
Down in the bluebells, or a wren light rustling
Among sere leaves and twigs, might all be heard.

O magic sleep ! O comfortable bird,
That broodest o'er the troubled sea of the mind
Till it is hush'd and smooth ! O unconfin'd
Restraint ! imprisoned liberty ! great key
To golden palaces, strange minstrelsy,
Fountains grotesque, new trees, bespangled caves,
Echoing grottos, full of tumbling waves
And moonlight ; ay, to all the mazy world
Of silvery enchantment !—who, upfurl'd
Beneath thy drowsy wing a triple hour,
But renovates and lives?—Thus, in the bower,
Endymion was calm'd to life again.
Opening his eyelids with a healthier brain,
He said . ' I feel this thine endearing love,
All through my bosom : thou art as a dove
Trembling its closed eyes and sleeked wings
About me ; and the pearliest dew not brings

Such morning incense from the fields of May,
As do those brighter drops that twinkling stray
From those kind eyes,—the very home and haunt
Of sisterly affection. Can I want
Aught else, aught nearer heaven, than such
tears?

Yet dry them up, in bidding hence all fears
That, any longer, I will pass my days
Alone and sad. No, I will once more raise -
My voice upon the mountain-heights ; once more
Make my horn parley from their foreheads hoar .
Again my trooping hounds their tongues shall lol
Around the breathed boar : again I'll poll
The fair-grown yew-tree, for a chosen bow :
And, when the pleasant sun is getting low,
Again I'll linger in a sloping mead
To hear the speckled thrushes, and see feed
Our idle sheep. So be thou cheered, sweet,
And, if thy lute is here, softly entreat
My soul to keep in its resolved course.' ~

Hereat Peona, in their silver source,
Shut her pure sorrow drops with glad exclaim,
And took a lute, from which there pulsing came
A lively prelude, fashioning the way
In which her voice should wander. 'Twas a lay
More subtle cadenced, more forest wild
Than Dryope's lone lulling of her child ;
And nothing since has floated in the air
So mournful strange. Surely some influence arre
Went, spiritual, through the damsel's hand ,
For still, with Delphic emphasis, she spann'd
The quick invisible strings, even though she saw
Endymion's spirit melt away and thaw
Before the deep intoxication.
But soon she came, with sudden burst, upon
Her self-possession—syung the lute aside,
And earnestly said : ' Brother, 'tis vain to hide

That thou dost know of things mysterious,
Immortal, starry; such alone could thus
Weigh down thy nature Hast thou sinn'd in aught
Offensive to the heavenly powers? Caught
A Paphian dove upon a message sent?
Thy deathful bow against some deer-herd bent
Sacred to Dian? Haply, thou hast seen
Her naked limbs among the alders green;
And that, alas! is death. No, I can trace
Something more high perplexing in thy face!

Endymion look'd at her, and press'd her hand,
And said, 'Art thou so pale, who wast so bland
And merry in our meadows? How is this?
Tell me thine ailment: tell me all amiss!—
Ah! thou hast been unhappy at the change
Wrought suddenly in me. What indeed more strange?
Or more complete to overwhelm surmise?
Ambition is so sluggard: 'tis no prize,
That toiling years would put within my grasp,
That I have sighed for: with so deadly gasp
No man e'er panted for a mortal love.
So all have set my heavier grief above
These things which happen. Rightly have they done:
I, who still saw the horizontal sun
Heave his broad shoulder o'er the edge of the world,
Out-facing Lucifer, and then had hurl'd
My spear aloft, as signal for the chase—
I, who, for very sport of heart; would race
With my own steed from Araby; pluck down
A vulture from his towery perching; frown
A lion into growling, loth retire—
To lose, at once, all my toil-breeding fire,
And sink thus low! but I will ease my breast
Of secret grief, here in this bowery nest.

'This river does not see the naked sky,
Till it begins to progress silverly

Around the western border of the wood,
Whence, from a certain spot, its winding flood
Seems at the distance like a crescent moon :
And in that nook, the very pride of June,
Had I been used to pass my weary eves ,
The rather for the sun unwilling leaves
So dear a picture of his sovereign power,
And I could witness his most kingly hour,
When he doth tighten up the golden reins,
And paces leisurely down amber plains
His snorting four Now when his chariot last
Its beams against the zodiac-lion cast,
There blossom'd suddenly a magic bed
Of sacred ditamy, and poppies red :
At which I wonder'd greatly, knowing well
That but one night had wrought this flowery spell ;
And, sitting down close by, began to muse
What it might mean. Perhaps, thought I, Morpheus,
In passing here, his owlet pinions shook ;
O! it may be, ere matron Night uptook
Her 'ebon urn, young Mercury, by stealth,
Had dipp'd his rod in it - such garland wealth
Came not by common growth Thus on I thought,
Until my head was dizzy and distraught.
Moreover, through the dancing poppies stole
A breeze, most softly lulling to my soul ;
And shaping visions all about my sight
Of colours, wings, and bursts of spangly light ;
The which became more strange, and strange, and dim,
And then were gulf'd in a tumultuous swim :
And then I fell asleep. Ah, can I tell
The enchantment that afterwards befell ?
Yet it was but a dream - yet such a dream
That never tongue, although it overteem
With mellow utterance, like a cavern spring,
Could figure out and to conception bring
All I beheld and felt. Methought I lay
Watching the zenith, where the milky way

Among the stars in virgin splendour pours ;
And travelling my eye, until the doors
Of heaven appear'd to open for my flight,
I became loth and fearful to alight
From such high soaring by a downward glance :
So kept me steadfast in that airy trance,
Spreading imaginary pinions wide.
When, presently, the stars began to glide,
And faint away, before my eager view .
At which I sigh'd that I could not pursue,
And dropp'd my vision to the horizon's verge ;
And lo ! from opening clouds, I saw emerge
The loveliest moon, that ever silver'd o'er
A shell for Neptune's goblet : she did soar
So passionately bright, my dazzled soul
Commungling with her argent spheres did roll
Through clear and cloudy, even when she went
At last into a dark and vapoury tent—
Whereat, methought, the lidless-eyed train
Of planets all were in the blue again
To commune with those orbs, once more I rais'd
My sight right upward : but it was quite dazed
By a bright something, sailing down apace,
Making me quickly veil my eyes and face :
Again I look'd, and, O ye deities,
Who from Olympus watch our destinies !
Whence that completed form of all completeness ?
Whence came that high perfection of all sweetness ?
Speak, stubborn earth, and tell me where, O where
Hast thou a symbol of her golden hair ?
Not oat-sheaves drooping in the western sun ;
Not—thy soft hand, fair sister ! let me shun
Such follying before thee—yet she had,
Indeed, locks bright enough to make me mad ;
And they were simply gordian'd up and braided,
Leaving, in naked comeliness, unshaded,
Her pearl round ears, white neck, and orb'd brow ;
The which were blended in, I know not how,

With such a paradise of lips and eyes,
Blush-tinted cheeks, half smiles, and faintest sighs,
That, when I think thereon, my spirit clings
And plays about its fancy, till the stings
Of human neighbourhood envenom all.
Unto what awful power shall I call ?
To what high fane ?—Ah ! see her hovering feet,
More bluely vein'd, more soft, more whitely sweet
Than those of sea-born Venus, when she rose
From out her cradle shell. The wind out-blows
Her scarf into a fluttering pavilion ;
'Tis blue, and over-spangled with a million
Of little eyes, as though thou wert to shed,
Over the darkest, lushest bluebell bed,
Handfuls of daisies.'—' Endymion, how strange !
Dream within dream ! '—' She took an airy range,
And then, towards me, like a very maid,
Came blushing, waning, willing, and afraid,
And press'd me by the hand : Ah ! 'twas too much ;
Methought I fainted at the charmed touch,
Yet held my recollection, even as one
Who' dives three fathoms where the waters run
Gurgling in beds of coral . for anon,
I felt upmounted in that region
Where falling stars dart their artillery forth,
And eagles struggle with the buffeting north
That balances the heavy meteor-stone ;—
Felt too, I was not fearful, nor alone,
But lapp'd and lull'd along the dangerous sky.
Soon, as it seem'd, we left our journeying high,
And straightway into frightful eddies swoop'd ;
Such as aye muster where gray time has scoop'd
Hugh dens and caverns in a mountain's side :
There hollow sounds arous'd me, and I sigh'd
To faint once more by looking on my bliss—
I was distracted ; madly did I kiss
The wooing arms which held me, and did give
My eyes at once to death - but 'twas to live,

To take in draughts of life from the gold fount
Of kind and passionate looks, to count, and
count

The moments, by some greedy help that seem'd
A second self, that each might be redeem'd
And plunder'd of its load of blessedness.

Ah, desperate mortal! I even dared to press

Her very cheek against my crowned lip,

And, at that moment, felt my body dip

Into a warmer air: a moment more,

Our feet were soft in flowers. There was store

Of newest joys upon that alp. Sometimes

A scent of violets, and blossoming limes,

Loiter'd around us; then of honey cells;

Made delicate from all white-flower bells;

And once, above the edges of our nest,

An arch face peep'd,—an Oread as I guess'd.

'Why did I dream that sleep o'erpower'd me,
In midst of all this heaven? Why not see,

Far off, the shadows of his pinions dark,

And stare them from me? But no, like a spark

That needs must die, although its little beam

Reflects upon a diamond, my sweet dream

Fell into nothing—into stupid sleep.

And so it was, until a gentle creep,

A careful moving caught my waking ears,

And up I started: Ah! my sighs, my tears,

My clenched hands;—for lo! the poppies hung

Dew-dabbled on their stalks, the ouzel sung

A heavy ditty, and the sullen day

Had chidden herald Hesperus away,

With leaden looks: the solitary breeze

Bluster'd, and slept, and its wild self did tease

With wayward melancholy; and I thought,

Mark me, Peona! that sometimes it brought

Faint fare-thee-wells, and sigh-shrilled adieus!—

Away I wander'd—all the pleasant hues

Of heaven and earth had faded deepest shades
 Were deepest dungeons ; heaths and sunny glades
 Were full of pestilent light, our taintless rills
 Seem'd sooty, and o'erspread with upturn'd gills
 Of dying fish ; the vermeil rose had blown
 In frightful scarlet, and its thorns outgrown
 - Like spiked aloe. If an innocent bird
 Before my heedless footsteps stirr'd, and stirr'd
 In little journeys, I beheld in it
 A disguis'd demon, missioned to knit
 My soul with under darkness ; to entice
 My stumblings down some monstrous precipice :
 Therefore I eager followed, and did curse
 The disappointment Time, that aged nurse,
 Rock'd me to patience Now, thank gentle heaven !
 These things, with all their comfortings, are given
 To my down-sunken hours, and with thee,
 - Sweet sister, help to stem the ebbing sea
 Of weary life.'

Thus ended he, and both
 Sat silent for the maid was very loth
 To answer, feeling well that breathed words
 Would all be lost, unheard, and vain as swords
 Against the encased crocodile, or leaps
 Of grasshoppers against the sun. 'She weeps,
 And wonders ; struggles to devise some blame ;
 To put on such a look as would say, *Shame*
On this poor weakness ' but, for all her strife,
 She could as soon have crush'd away the life
 From a sick dove. At length, to break the pause,
 She said with trembling chance ' Is this the cause ?
 This all ? Yet it is strange, and sad, alas !
 That one who through this middle earth should pass
 Most like a sojourning demi-god, and leave
 His name upon the harp-string, should achieve
 No higher bard than simple maidenhood,
 Singing alone, and fearfully,—how the blood

Left his young cheek ; and how he used to stray
He knew not where . and how he would say, *nay*,
If any said 'twas love : and yet 'twas love ;
What could it be but love ? How a ring-dove
Let fall a sprig of yew-tree in his path ;
And how he died . and then, that love doth scathe
The gentle heart, as northern blasts do roses ;
And then the ballad of his sad life closes
With sighs, and an alas !—Endymion !
Be rather in the trumpet's mouth,—anon
Among the winds at large—that all may hearken !
Although, before the crystal heavens darken,
I watch and dote upon the silver lakes
Pictured in western cloudiness, that takes
The semblance of gold rocks and bright gold sands,
Islands, and creeks, and amber-fretted strands
With horses prancing o'er them, palaces
And towers of amethyst,—would I so tease
My pleasant days, because I could not mount
Into those regions ? The Morphean fount
Of that fine element that visions, dreams,
And fitful whims of sleep are made of, streams
Into its airy channels with so subtle,
So thin a breathing, not the spider's shuttle,
Circled a million times within the space
Of a swallow's nest-door, could delay a trace,
A tinting of its quality : how light
Must dreams themselves be ; seeing they're more slight
Than the mere nothing that engenders them !
Then wherefore sully the entrusted gem
Of high and noble life with thoughts so sick ?
Why pierce high-fronted honour to the quick
For nothing but a dream ?' Hereat the youth
Look'd up . a conflicting of shame and ruth
Was in his plaited brow . yet his eyelids
Widened a little, as when Zephyr bids
A little breeze to creep between the fans
Of careless butterflies : amid his pains

He seem'd to taste a drop of manna-dew,
Full palatable ; and a colour grew
Upon his cheek, while thus he lifeſul ſpake.

'Peona ! ever have I long'd to ſlake
My thirſt for the world's praiſes nothing baſe,
No merely ſlumberous phantasm, could unlace
The ſtubborn canvas for my voyage prepared—
Though now 'tis tattered ; leaving my bark bared
And ſullenly drifting : yet my higher hope
Is of too wide, too rainbow-large a ſcope,
To fret at myriads of earthly wrecks.
Wherein lies happineſs ? In that which beckſ
Our ready minds to fellowſhip divine,
A fellowſhip with eſſence ; till we ſhine,
Full alchemiſed, and free of ſpace Behold
The clear religion of heaven ! Fold
A roſe-leaf round thy finger's taperneſs,
And ſoothe thy lips . hiſt ! when the airy ſtreſs
Of muſic's kiſs impregnates the free winds ;—
And with a ſympathetic touch unbinds
Æolian magic from their lucid wombs .
Then old ſongs waken from enclouded tombs ;
Old ditties ſigh above their father's grave,
Ghosts of melodious prophesyings rave
Round every ſpot where trod Apollo's foot ;
Bronze clarions awake, and faintly bruit,
Where long ago a giant battle was ;
And, from the turf, a lullaby doth paſs
In every place where infant Orpheus ſlept .
Feel we theſe things !—that moment have we ſtept
Into a ſort of oneneſs, and our ſtate
Is like a floating ſpirit's . But there are
Richer entanglements, enthralments far
More ſelf-deſtroying, leading, by degrees,
To the chief intensity : the crown of theſe
Is made of love and friendſhip, and ſits high
Upon the forehead of humanity.

All its more ponderous and bulky worth-
Is friendship; whence there ever issues forth
A steady splendour; but at the tip-top,
There hangs by unseen film, an orb'd drop
Of light, and that is love: its influence
Thrown in our eyes genders a novel sense,
At which we start and fret; till in the end,
Melting into its radiance, we blend,
Mingle, and so become a part of it,—
Nor with aught else can our souls interknit
So wingedly: when we combine therewith,
Life's self is nourish'd by its proper pith,
And we are nurtured like a pelican brood.
Ay, so delicious is the unsating food,
That men, who might have tower'd in the van
Of all the congregated world, to fan
And winnow from the coming step of time
All chaff of custom, wipe away all slime
Left by men-slugs and human serpentry,
Have been content to let occasion die,
Whilst they did sleep in love's Elysium.
And, truly, I would rather be struck dumb,
Than speak against this ardent listlessness:
For I have ever thought that it might bless
The world with benefits unknowingly,
As does the nightingale, up-perched high,
And cloister'd among cool and bunched leaves—
She sings but to her love, nor e'er conceives
How tiptoe Night holds back her dark-gray
hood.
Just so may love, although 'tis understood
The mere commingling of passionate breath,
Produce more than our searching witnesseth:
What I know not: but who, of men, can tell
That flowers would bloom, or that green fruit
would swell.
To melting pulp, that fish would have bright mail,
The earth its dower of river, wood, and vale,

The meadows runnels, runnels pebble-stones,
 The seed its harvest, or the lute its tones,
 Tones ravishment, or ravishment its sweet
 If human souls did never kiss and greet ?

‘ Now, if this earthly love has power to make
 Men’s being mortal, immortal ; to shake
 Ambition from their memories, and brim
 Their measure of content . what merest whim,
 Seems all this poor endeavour after fame,
 To one, who keeps within his steadfast aim
 A love immortal, an immortal too.
 Look not so wider’d ; for these things are true,
 And never can be born of atomies
 That buzz about our slumbers, like brain-flies,
 Leaving us fancy-sick. No, no, I’m sure,
 My restless spirit never could endure
 To brood so long upon one luxury,
 Unless it did, though fearfully, espy
 A hope beyond the shadow of a dream.
 My sayings will the less obscured seem,
 When I have told thee how my waking sight
 Has made me scruple whether that same night
 Was pass’d in dreaming. Harken, sweet Peona !
 Beyond the matron-temple of Latona,
 Which we should see but for these darkening boughs,
 Lie as deep hollow, from whose ragged brows
 Bushes and trees do lean all round athwart
 And meet so nearly, that with wings outraught,
 And spreaded tail, a vulture could not glide
 Past them, but he must brush on every side.
 Some moulder’d steps lead into this cool cell,
 Far as the slabbed margin of a well,
 Whose patient level pceps its crystal eye
 Right upward, through the bushes, to the sky.
 Oft have I brought thee flowers, on their stalks
 set
 Like vestal primroses, but dark velvet

Edges them round, and they have golden pits ·
'Twas there I got them, from the gaps and slits
In a mossy stone, that sometimes was my seat,
When all above was faint with midday heat.
And there in strife no burning thoughts to heed,
I'd bubble up the water through a reed ;
So reaching back to boyhood · make me ships
Of moulted feathers, touchwood, alder chips,
With leaves stuck in them ; and the Neptune be
Of their petty ocean. Oftener, heavily,
When love-lorn hours had left me less a child,
I sat contemplating the figures wild
Of o'erhead clouds melting the mirror through.
Upon a day, while thus I watch'd, by flew
A cloudy Cupid, with his bow and quiver ;
So plainly character'd, no breeze would shiver
The happy chance : so happy, I, was fain
To follow it upon the open plain,
And, therefore, was just going , when, behold !
A wonder, far as any I have told—
The same bright face I tasted in my sleep,
Smiling in the clear well. My heart did leap
Through the cool depth.—It moved as if to flee—
I started up, when lo ! refreshfully,
There came upon my face in plenteous showers
Dewdrops, and dewy buds, and leaves, and flowers,
Wrapping all objects from my smothered sight,
Bathing my spirit in a new delight.
Ay, such a breathless honey-feel of bliss
Alone preserved me from the drear abyss
Of death, for the fair form had gone again.
Pleasure is oft a visitant ; but pain
Clings cruelly to us, like the gnawing sloth
On the deer's tender haunches : late, and loth,
'Tis scar'd away by slow returning pleasure.
How sickening, how dark the dreadful leisure
Of weary days, made deeper exquisite,
By a fore-knowledge of unslumbrous night !

'Of sadness. O that she would take my vows,
'And breathe them sighingly among the boughs,
'To sue her gentle ears for whose fair-head,
'Daily, I pluck sweet flowerets from their bed,
'And weave them dyingly—send honey-whispers
'Round every leaf, that all those gentle lispers
'May sigh my love unto her pitying !
'O charitable Echo ! hear, and sing
'This ditty to her !—tell her'—so I stay'd
My foolish tongue, and listening, half afraid,
Stood stupefied with my own empty folly,
And blushing for the freaks of melancholy.
Salt tears were coming, when I heard my name
Most fondly lipp'd, and then these accents came :
'Endymion ! the cave is secreter
'Than the isle of Delos. Echo hence shall stir
'No sighs but sigh-warm kisses, or light noise
'Of thy combing hand, the while it travelling
 cloys
'And trembles through my labyrinthine hair.'
At that oppress'd I hurried in.—Ah ! where
Are those swift moments ? Whither are they fled ?
I'll smile no more, Peona ; nor will wed
Sorrow the way to death ; but patiently
Bear up against it : so farewell, sad sigh ;
And come instead demurest meditation,
To occupy me wholly, and to fashion
My pilgrimage for the world's dusky brink :
No more will I count over, link by link,
My chain of grief : no longer strive to find
A half-forgetfulness in mountain wind
Blustering about my ears : ay, thou shalt see,
Dearest of sisters, what my life shall be ;
What a calm round of hours shall make my days.
There is a paly flame of hope that plays
Where'er I look : but yet, I'll say 'tis naught—
And here I bid it die. Have not I caught,
Already, a more healthy countenance ?

By this the sun is setting ; we may chance
Meet some of our near-dwellers with my car.'

This said, he rose, faint-smiling like a star
Through autumn mists, and took Peona's hand :
They stept into the boat, and launch'd from land.

BOOK II

O SOVEREIGN power of love ! O grief ! O balm !
All records, saving thine, come cool, and calm,
And shadowy, through the mist of passed years :
For others, good or bad, hatred and tears
Have become indolent ; but touching thine,
One sigh doth echo, one poor sob doth pine,
One kiss brings honey-dew from buried days.
The woes of Troy, towers smothering o'er their blaze,
Stiff-holden shields, far-piercing spears, keen blades,
Struggling, and blood, and shrieks—all dimly fades
Into some backward corner of the brain ;
Yet, in our very souls, we feel amain
The close of Troilus and Cressid sweet.
Hence, pageant history ! hence, gilded cheat !
Swart planet in the universe of deeds !
Wide sea, that one continuous murmur breeds
Along the pebbled shore of memory !
Many old rotten-timber'd boats there be
Upon thy vaporous bosom, magnified
To goodly vessels ; many a sail of pride,
And golden keel'd, is left unlaunch'd and dry.
But wherefore this ? What care, though owl did fly
About the great Athenian admiral's mast ?
What care, though striding Alexander past
The Indus with his Macedonian numbers ?
Though old Ulysses tortured from his slumbers
The glutt'd Cyclops, what care ?—Juliet leaning
Amid her window-flowers,—sighing,—weaning

Tenderly her fancy from its maiden snow,
Doth more avail than these : the silver flow
Of Hero's tears, the swoon of Imogen,
Fair Pastorella in the bandit's den,
Are things to brood on with more ardency
Than the death-day of empires. Fearfully
Must such conviction come upon his head,
Who, thus far, discontent, has dared to tread,
Without one muse's smile, or kind behest,
The path of love and poesy. But rest,
In chaffing restlessness, is yet more drear
Than to be crush'd, in striving to uprear
Love's standard on the battlements of song.
So once more days and nights aid me along,
Like legion'd soldiers.

Brain-sick shepherd prince !
What promise has thou faithful guarded since
The day of sacrifice ? Or, have new sorrows
Come with the constant dawn upon thy morrows ?
Alas ! 'tis his old grief. For many days,
Has he been wandering in uncertain ways :
Through wilderness, and woods of mossed oaks ;
Counting his woe-worn minutes, by the strokes
Of the lone woodcutter ; and listening still,
Hour after hour, to each lush-leav'd rill.
Now he is sitting by a shady spring,
And elbow-deep with feverous fingering
Stems the upbursting cold : a wild rose-tree
Pavilions him in bloom, and he doth see
A bud which snares his fancy : lo ! but now
He plucks it, dips its stalk in the water : how !
It swells, it buds, it flowers beneath his sight ;
And, in the middle, there is softly pight
A golden butterfly ; upon whose wings
There must be surely character'd strange things,
For with wide eye he wonders, and smiles oft.

Lightly this little herald flew aloft,
Follow'd by glad Endymion's clasped hands :
Onward it flies From languor's sullen bands
His limbs are loos'd, and eager, on he lies
Dazzled to trace it in the sunny skies.
It seem'd he flew, the way so easy was ;
And like a new-born spirit did he pass
Through the green evening quiet in the sun,
O'er many a heath, through many a woodland
dun,
Through buried paths, where sleepy twilight dreams
The summer time away. One track unseams
A wooded cleft, and, far away, the blue
Of ocean fades upon him : then, anew,
He sinks adown a solitary glen,
Where there was never sound of mortal men,
Savouring, perhaps, some snow-light cadences
Melting to silence, when upon the brèeze
Some holy bark let forth an anthem sweet,
To cheer itself to Delphi. Still his feet
Went swift beneath the merry-winged guide,
Until it reach'd a splashing fountain's side
That, near a cavern's mouth, for ever pour'd
Unto the temperate air : then high it soar'd,
And, downward, suddenly began to dip,
As if, athirst with so much toil, 'twould sip
The crystal spout-head : so it did, with touch
Most delicate, as though afraid to smutch
Even with mealy gold the waters clear.
But, at that very touch, to disappear
So fairy-quick, was strange ! Bewildered,
Endymion sought around, and shook each bed
Of covert flowers in vain ; and then he flung
Himself along the grass - What gentle tongue,
What whisperer disturb'd his gloomy rest ?
It was a nymph uprisen to the breast
In the fountain's pebbly margin, and she stood
'Mong lilies, like the youngest of the brood.

To him her dripping hand she softly kist,
And anxiously began to plait and twist
Her ringlets round her fingers, saying : ' Youth !
Too long, alas, hast thou starv'd on the ruth,
The bitterness of love : too long indeed,
Seeing thou art so gentle. Could I weed
Thy soul of care, by heavens, I would offer
All the bright riches of my crystal coffer
To Amphitrite ; all my clear-eyed fish,
Golden, or rainbow-sided, or purplish,
Vermilion-tail'd, or finn'd with silvery gauze ;
Yea, or my veined pebble-floor, that draws
A virgin light to the deep ; my grotto-sands
Tawny and gold, oozed slowly from far lands
By my diligent springs ; my level lilies, shells,
My charming-rod, my potent river spells ;
Yes, everything, even to the pearly cup
Meander gave me,—for I bubbled up
To fainting creatures in a desert wild.
But woe is me, I am but as a child
To gladden thee ; and all I dare to say,
Is, that I pity thee ; that on this day,
I've been thy guide ; that thou must wander far
In other regions, past the scanty bar
To mortal steps, before thou canst be ta'en
From every wasting sigh, from every pain,
Into the gentle bosom of thy love.
Why it is thus, one knows in heaven above :
But, a poor Naiad, I guess not. Farewell !
I have a ditty for my hollow cell.'

Hereat she vanished from Endymion's gaze,
Who brooded o'er the water in amaze :
The dashing fount pour'd on, and where its
pool
Lay, half asleep, in grass and rushes cool,
Quick waterflies and gnats were sporting still,
And fish were dimpling, as if good nor ill

Had fallen out that hour. The wanderer,
Holding his forehead, to keep off the burr
Of smothering fancies, patiently sat down ;
And, while beneath the evening's sleepy frown
Glow-worms began to trim their starry lamps,
Thus breath'd he to himself : ' Whoso encamps
To take a fancied city of delight,
O what a wretch is he ! and when 'tis his,
After long toil and travelling, to miss
The kernel of his hopes, how more than vile :
Yet, for him there's refreshment even in toil :
Another city doth he set about,
Free from the smallest pebble-bead of doubt
That he will seize on trickling honeycombs .
Alas, he finds them dry ; and then he foams,
And onward to another city speeds.
But this is human life : the war, the deeds,
The disappointment, the anxiety,
Imaginations struggles, far and nigh,
All human ; bearing in themselves this good,
That they are still the air, the subtle food,
To make us feel existence, and to show
How quiet death is Where soil is men grow,
Whether to weeds or flowers ; but for me,
There is no depth to strike in : I can see
Naught earthly worth my compassing , so stand
Upon a misty, jutting head of land
Alone ? No, no ; and by the Orphean lute,
When mad Eurydice is listening to't ;
I'd rather stand upon this misty peak,
With not a thing to sigh for, or to seek,
But the soft shadow of my thrice-seen love,
Than be—I care not what. O meekest dove
Of heaven ! O Cynthia, ten times bright and
fair !
From thy blue throne, now filling all the air,
Glance but one little beam of temper'd light
Into my bosom, that the dreadful might

And tyranny of love-be somewhat scar'd !
Yet do not so, sweet queen ; one torment spared,
Would give a pang to jealous misery,
Worse than the torment's self : but rather tie
Large wings upon my shoulders, and point out
My love's far dwelling. Though the playful rout
Of Cupids shun thee, too divine art thou,
Too keen in beauty, for thy silver prow
Not to have dipp'd in love's most gentle stream.
O be propitious, nor severely deem
My madness impious ; for, by all the stars
That tend thy bidding, I do think the bars
That kept my spirit in are burst—that I
Am sailing with thee through the dizzy sky !
How beautiful thou art ! The world how deep !
How tremulous-dazzlingly the wheels sweep
Around their axle ! Then these gleaming reins,
How lithe ! When this thy chariot attains
Its airy goal, haply some bowei veils
Those twilight eyes ? Those eyes!—my spirit fails—
Dear goddess, help ! or the wide-gaping air
Will gulf me—help !—At this with madden'd stare,
And lifted hands, and trembling lips he stood ;
Like old Deucalion mountain'd o'er the flood,
Or blind Orion hungry for the morn.
And, but from the deep cavern there was borne
A voice, he had been froze to senseless stone ;
Nor sigh of his, nor plaint, nor passion'd moan
Had more been heard. Thus swell'd it forth 'Descend,
Young mountaineer ' descend where alleys bend
Into the sparry hollows of the world !
Oft hast thou seen bolts of the thunder hurl'd
As from thy threshold ; day by day hast been
A little lower than the chully sheen
Of icy pinnacles, and dipp'dst thine arms
Into the deadening ether that still charms
Their marble being : now, as deep profound
As those are high, descend ! He ne'er is crown'd

With immortality, who fears to follow
Where airy voices lead · so through the hollow,
The silent mysteries of earth, descend !'

He heard but the last words, nor could contend
One moment in reflection . for he fled
Into the fearful deep, to hide his head
From the clear moon, the trees, and coming madness.

'Twas far too strange, and wonderful for sadness ;
Sharpening, by degrees, his appetite
To dive into the deepest: Dark, nor light,
The region ; nor bright, nor sombre wholly,
But mingled up ; a gleaming melancholy ;
A dusky empire and its diadems ;
One faint eternal eventide of gems.
Ay, millions sparkled on a vein of gold,
 long whose track the prince quick footsteps told,
 ith all its lines abrupt and angular :
 ut-shooting sometimes, like a meteor-star,
 hrough a vast antre ; then the metal woof,
Like Vulcan's rainbow, with some monstrous roof
Curves hugely : now, far in the deep abyss,
It seems an angry lightning, and doth hiss
Fancy into belief : anon it leads
Through winding passages, where sameness breeds
Vexing conceptions of some sudden change ;
Whether to silver grotts, or giant range
Of sapphire columns, or fantastic bridge
Athwart a flood of crystal. On a ridge
Now fareth he, that o'er the vast beneath
Towers like an ocean-cliff, and whence he seeth
A hundred waterfalls, whose voices come
But as the murmuring surge Chilly and numb
His bosom grew, when first he, far away
Descried an orb'd diamond, set to fray
Old darkness from his throne : 'twas like the sun
Uprisen o'er chaos : and with such a stun

Came the amazement, that, absorb'd in it,
He saw not fiercer wonders—past the wit
Of any spirit to tell, but one of those
Who, when this planet's sphering time doth close,
Will be its high remembrancers : who they ?
The mighty ones who have made eternal day
For Greece and England. While astonishment
With deep-drawn sighs was quieting, he went
Into a marble gallery, passing through
A mimic temple, so complete and true
In sacred custom, that he well-nigh fear'd
To search it inwards ; whence far off appear'd,
Through a long pillar'd vista, a fair shrine,
And just beyond, on light tiptoe divine,
A quiver'd Dian. Stepping awfully,
The youth approach'd, oft turning his veil'd eye
Down sidelong aisles, and into niches old.
And, when more near against the marble cold
He had touch'd his forehead, he began to thread
All courts and passages, where silence dead
Roused by his whispering footsteps, murmured
faint :

And long he traversed to and fro, to acquaint
Himself with every mystery, and awe ;
Till, weary, he sat down before the maw
Of a wide outlet, fathomless and dim,
To wild uncertainty and shadows grim.
There, when new wonders ceas'd to float before,
And thoughts of self came on, how crude and sore
The journey homeward to habitual self !
A mad-pursuing of the fog-born elf,
Whose fitting lantern, through rude nettle-brier,
Cheats us into a swamp, into a fire,
Into the bosom of a hated thing.

What misery most drowningly doth sing
In lone Endymion's ear, now he has caught
The goal of consciousness ? Ah, 'tis the thought

The deadly feel of solitude : for lo !
He cannot see the heavens, nor the flow
Of rivers, nor hill-flowers running wild
In pink and purple chequer, nor, up-piled,
The cloudy rack slow journeying in the west,
Like herded elephants ; nor felt, nor prest
Cool grass, nor tasted the fresh slumberous air ;
But far from such companionship to wear
An unknown time, surcharg'd with grief, away,
Was now his lot And must he patient stay,
Tracing fantastic figures with his spear ?
'No !' exclaim'd he, 'why should I tarry here ?'
No ! loudly echoed times innumerable
At which he straightway started, and 'gan tell
His paces back into the temple's chief,
Warming and glowing strong in the belief
Of help from Dian : so that when again
He caught her airy form, thus did he plain,
Moving more near the while : 'O Haunter chaste
Of riversides, and woods, and heathy waste,
Where with thy silver bow and arrows keen,
Art thou now forested ? O woodland Queen,
What smoothest air thy smoother forehead woos ?
Where dost thou listen to the wide halloos
Of thy departed nymphs ? Through what dark tree
Glimmers thy crescent ? Wheresoe'er it be,
'Tis in the breath of heaven : thou dost taste
Freedom as none can taste it, nor dost waste
Thy loveliness in dismal elements ;
But, finding in our green earth sweet contents,
There livest blissfully. Ah, if to thee
It feels Elysian, how rich to me,
An exil'd mortal, sounds its pleasant name !
Within my breast there lives a choking flame—
O let me cool it among the zephyr-boughs !
A homeward fever parches up my tongue—
O let me slake it at the running springs !
Upon my ear a noisy nothing rings—

O let me once more hear the linnet's note !
Before mine eyes thick films and shadows float—
O let me 'noint them with the heaven's light !
Dost thou now lave thy feet and ankles white ?
O think how sweet to me the freshening sluice !
Dost thou now please thy thirst with berry-juice ?
O think how this dry palate would rejoice !
If in soft slumber thou dost hear my voice,
O think how I should love a bed of flowers !—
Young goddess ! let me see my native bowers !
Deliver me from this rapacious deep !

Thus ending loudly, as he would o'erleap
His destiny, alert he stood : but when
Obstinate silence came heavily again,
Feeling about for its old couch of space
And airy cradle, lowly bow'd his face
Desponding, o'er the marble floor's cold thrill.
But 'twas not long ; for, sweeter than the rill
To its old channel, or a swollen tide
To margin shallows, were the leaves he spied,
And flowers, and wreaths, and ready myrtle crowns
Up heaping through the slab : refreshment drowns
Itself, and strives its own delights to hide—
Nor in one spot alone ; the floral pride
In a long whispering birth enchanted grew
Before his footsteps ; as when heaved anew
Old ocean rolls a lengthened wave to the shore,
Down whose green back the short-liv'd foam, all hoar,
Bursts gradual, with a wayward indolence.

Increasing still in heart, and pleasant sense,
Upon his fairy journey on he hastes ;
So anxious for the end, he scarcely wastes
One moment with his hand among the sweets :
Onward he goes—he stops—his bosom beats
As plainly in his ear, as the faint charm
Of which the throbs were born. This still alarm,

In midst of all, there lay a sleeping youth
Of fondest beauty ; fonder, in fair sooth,
Than sighs could fathom, or contentment reach :
And coverlids gold-tinted like the peach,
Or ripe October's faded marigolds,
Fell sleek about him in a thousand folds—
Not hiding up an Apollian curve
Of neck and shoulder, nor the tenting swerve
Of knee from knee, nor ankles pointing light ;
But rather, giving them to the filled sight
Officiously. . . Sideway his face reposed
On one white arm, and tenderly unclosed,
By tenderest pressure, a faint damask mouth
To slumbry pout ; just as the morning south
Disparts a dew-lipp'd rose. Above his head,
Four lily stalks did their white honours wed
To make a coronal ; and round him grew
All tendrils green, of every bloom-and hue,
Together intertwined and trammelled fresh :
The vine of glossy sprout ; the ivy mesh,
Shading its Ethiop berries ; and woodbine,
Of velvet leaves and bugle-blooms divine ;
Convolvulus in streaked vases flush ;
The creeper, mellowing for an autumn blush ;
And virgin's bower, trailing airily ;
With others of the sisterhood. Hard by,
Stood serene Cupids watching silently.
One, kneeling to a lyre, touch'd the strings,
Muffling to death the pathos with his wings ;
And, ever and anon, uprose to look
At the youth's slumber ; while another took
A willow-bough, distilling odorous dew,
And shook it on his hair ; another flew
In through the woven roof, and fluttering-wise
Rain'd violets upon his sleeping eyes.

At these enchantments, and yet many more,
The breathless Latmian wonder'd o'er and o'er ;

Until, impatient in embarrassment,
He forthright pass'd, and lightly treading went
To that same feather'd lyrist, who straightway,
Smiling, thus whisper'd : ' Though from upper day
Thou art a wanderer, and thy presence here
Might seem unholy, be of happy cheer !
For 'tis the nicest touch of human honour,
When some ethereal and high-favouring donor
Presents immortal bowers to mortal sense ;
As now 'tis done to thee, Endymion. Hence
Was I in no wise startled. So recline
Upon these living flowers. Here is wine,
Alive with sparkles—never, I aver,
Since Ariadne was a vintager,
So cool a purple : taste these juicy pears,
Sent me by sad Vertumnus, when his fears
Were high about Pomona : here is cream,
Deepening to richness from a snowy gleam ;
Sweeter than that nurse Amalthea skimm'd
For the boy Jupiter : and here, undimm'd
By any touch, a bunch of blooming plums
Ready to melt between an infant's gums .
And here is manna pick'd from Syrian trees,
In starlight, by the three Hesperides .
Feast on, and meanwhile I will let thee know
Of all these things around us ' He did so,
Still brooding o'er the cadence of his lyre ;
And thus : ' I need not any hearing tire
By telling how the sea-born goddess pined
For a mortal youth, and how she strove to bind
Him all in all unto her doting self
Who would not be so prison'd ? but, fond elf,
He was content to let her amorous plea
Faint through his careless arms ; content to see
An unseiz'd heaven dying at his feet ;
Content, O fool ! to make a cold retreat,
When on the pleasant grass such love, lovelorn,
Lay sorrowing ; when every tear was born

To your dimpled arms. Once more sweet life begin !
 At this, from every side they hurried in,
 Rubbing their sleepy eyes with lazy wrists,
 And doubling over head their little fists
 In backward yawns. But all were soon alive :
 For as delicious wine doth, sparkling, dive
 In nectar'd clouds and-curls through water fair,
 So from the harbour roof down swell'd an air
 Odorous and enlivening ; making all
 To laugh, and play, and sing, and loudly call
 For their sweet queen : when lo ! the wreathed green
 Disparted, and far upward could be seen
 Blue heaven, and a silver car, air-borne,
 Whose silent wheels, fresh wet from clouds of morn,
 Spun off a drizzling dew,—which falling chill
 On soft Adonis' shoulders, made him still
 Nestle and turn uneasily about
 Soon were the white doves plain, with neck stretch'd
 out,

 and silken traces lighten'd in descent ;
 And soon, returning from love's banishment,
 Queen Venus leaning downward open-arm'd :
 Her shadow fell upon his breast, and charm'd
 A tumult to his heart, and a new life
 Into his eyes. Ah, miserable strife,
 But for her comforting ! unhappy sight,
 But meeting her blue orbs ! Who, who can write
 Of these first minutes ? The unchariest muse
 To embracements warm as theirs makes coy excuse.

O it has ruffled every spirit there,
 Saving love's self, who stands superb to share
 The general gladness : awfully he stands,
 A sovereign quell is in his waving hands ;
 No sight can bear the lightning of his bow ;
 His quiver is mysterious, none can know
 What themselves think of it ; from forth his eyes
 There darts strange light of varied hues and dies :

A scowl is sometimes on his brow, but who
Look full upon it feel anon the blue
Of his fair eyes run liquid through their souls.
Endymion feels it, and no more controls
The burning prayer within him ; so, bent low,
He had begun a plaining of his woe.
But Venus, bending forward, said : ' My child,
Favour this gentle youth ; his days are wild
With love—he—but alas ! too well I see
Thou know'st the deepness of his misery.
Ah, smile not so, my son : I tell thee true,
That when through heavy hours I used to rue
The endless sleep of this new-born Adon',
This stranger aye I pitied. For upon
A dreary morning once I fled away
Into the breezy clouds, to weep and pray
For this my love : for vexing Mars had teased
Me even to tears thence, when a little eased,
Down-looking, vacant, through a hazy wood,
I saw this youth as he despairing stood :
Those same dark curls blown vagrant in the wind ;
Those same full fringed lids a constant blind
Over his sullen eyes : I saw him throw
Himself on wither'd leaves, even as though
Death had come sudden ; for no jot he moved,
Yet mutter'd wildly. I could hear he loved
Some fair immortal, and that his embrace
Had zoned her through the night. There is no trace
Of this in heaven. I have mark'd each cheek,
And find it is the vainest thing to seek ;
And that of all things 'tis kept secretest.
Endymion ! one day thou wilt be blest :
So still obey the guiding hand that fends
Thee safely through these wonders for sweet ends.
'Tis a concealment needful in extreme ;
And if I guess'd not so, the sunny beam
Thou shouldst mount up to with me. Now adieu !
Here must we leave thee.'—At these words upflew

The impatient doves, uprose the floating car,
Up went the hum celestial. 'High afar
The Latmian saw them minish into naught ;
And, when all were clear vanish'd, still he caught
A vivid lightning from that dreadful bow.
When all was darkened, with Ætnean throe
The earth clos'd—gave a solitary moan—
And left him once again in twilight lone.

He did not rave, he did not stare aghast,
For all those visions were o'ergone, and past,
And he in loneliness : he felt assur'd
Of happy times, when all he had endur'd
Would seem a feather to the mighty prize.
So, with unusual gladness, on he hies
Through caves, and palaces of mottled ore,
Gold dome, and crystal wall, and turquoise floor,
Black polish'd porticos of awful shade,
And, at the last, a diamond balustrade,
Leading afar past wild magnificence,
Spiral through ruggedest loopholes, and thence
Stretching across a void, then guiding o'er
Enormous chāsms, where, all foam and roar,
Streams subterranean tease their granite beds ;
Then heighten'd just above the silvery heads
Of a thousand fountains, so that he could dash
The waters with his spear ; but at the splash,
Done heedlessly, those spouting columns rose
Sudden a poplar's height, and 'gan to enclose
His diamond path with fretwork streaming round
Alive, and dazzling cool, and with a sound,
Haply, like dolphin tumults, when sweet shells
Welcome the float of Thetis. Long he dwells
On this delight ; for, every minute's space,
The streams which changed magic interlace
Sometimes like delicatest lattices,
Cover'd with crystal vines ; then weeping trees,

Moving about as in a gentle wind,
Which, in a wink, to watery gauze refined,
Pour'd into shapes of curtain'd canopies,
Spangled, and rich with liquid broderies
Of flowers, peacocks, swans, and Naiads fair.
Swifter than lightning went these wonders rare ;
And then the water, into stubborn streams
Collecting, mimick'd the wrought oaken beams,
Pillars, and frieze, and high fantastic roof,
Of those dusk places in times far aloof
Cathedrals call'd. He bade a loth farewell
To these founts Portean, passing gulf, and dell,
And torrent, and ten thousand jutting shapes,
Half seen through deepest gloom, and grisly gapes,
Blackening on every side, and overhead
A vaulted dome like heaven's, far bespread
With starlight gems : ay, all so huge and strange,
The solitary felt a hurried change
Working within him into something dreary,—
Vex'd like a morning eagle, lost and weary,
And purblind amid foggy midnight wolds.
But he revives at once . for who beholds
New sudden things, nor casts his mental slough ?
Forth from a rugged arch, in the dusk below,
Came mother Cybele ! alone—alone—
In sombre chariot ; dark foldings thrown
About her majesty, and front death-pale,
With turrets crown'd. Four maned lions hale
The sluggish wheels ; solemn their toothed maws,
Their surly eyes brow-hidden, heavy paws
Uplifted drowsily, and nervy tails
Cowering their tawny brushes. Silent sails
This shadowy queen athwart, and faints away
In another gloomy arch.

Wherefore delay,
Young traveller, in such a mournful place ?
Art thou wayworn, or canst not further trace

The diamond path ? And does it indeed end
Abrupt in middle air ? Yet earthward bend
Thy forehead, and to Jupiter cloud-borne
Call ardently ! He was indeed wayworn ;
Abrupt, in middle air, his way was lost ;
To cloud-borne Jove he bowed, and there crost
Towards him a large eagle, 'twixt whose wings,
Without one impious word, himself he flings,
Committed to the darkness and the gloom :
Down, down, uncertain to what pleasant doom,
Swift as a fathoming plummet down he fell
Through unknown things ; till exhaled asphodel,
And rose, with spicy fannings interbreath'd,
Came swelling forth where little caves were wreath'd
So thick with leaves and mosses, that they seem'd
Large honey-combs of green, and freshly teem'd
With airs delicious In the greenest nook
The eagle landed him, and farewell took.

It was a jasmine bower, all bestrown
With golden moss. His every sense had grown
Ethereal for pleasure ; 'bove his head
Flew a delight half-graspable ; his tread
Was Hesperean ; to his capable ears
Silence was music from the holy spheres ;
A dewy luxury was in his eyes ;
The little flowers felt his pleasant sighs
And stirr'd them faintly Verdant cave and cell
He wander'd through, oft wondering at such swell
Of sudden exaltation : but, 'Alas !'
Said he, ' will all this gush of feeling pass
Away in solitude ? And must they wane,
Like melodies upon a sandy plain,
Without an echo ? Then shall I be left
So sad, so melancholy, so bereft !
Yet still I feel immortal ! - O my love,
My breath of life, where art thou ? High above,

Dancing before the morning gates of heaven ?
Or keeping watch among those starry seven,
Old Atlas' children ? Art a maid of the waters,
One of shell-winding Triton's bright-hair'd daughters ?
Or art, impossible ! a nymph of Dian's,
Weaving a coronal of tender scions
For very idleness ? Where'er thou art,
Methinks it now is at my will to start
Into thine arms ; to scare Aurora's train,
And snatch thee from the morning ; o'er the main
To scud like a wild bird, and take thee off -
From thy sea-foamy cradle ; or to doff
Thy shepherd vest, and woo thee 'mid fresh
leaves.

No, no, too eagerly my soul deceives
Its powerless self . I know this cannot be .
O let me then by some sweet dreaming flee
To her entrancements : hither sleep awhile !
Hither most gentle sleep ! and soothing foil
For some few hours the coming solitude .

Thus spake he, and that moment felt endued
With power to dream deliciously ; so wound
Through a dim passage, searching till he found
The smoothest mossy bed and deepest, where
He threw himself, and just into the air
Stretching his indolent arms, he took, O bliss !
A naked waist : ' Fair Cupid, whence is this ? '
A well-known voice sigh'd, ' Sweetest, here am I ! '
At which soft ravishment, with doting cry
They trembled to each other.—Helicon !
O fountain'd hill ! Old Homer's Helicon !
That thou wouldst spout a little streamlet o'er
These sorry pages ; then the verse would soar
And sing above this gentle pair, like lark
Over his nested young : but all is dark
Around thine aged top, and thy clear fount
Exhales in mists to heaven. Ay, the count

Of mighty Poets is made up ; the scroll
Is folded by the Muses ; the bright roll
Is in Apollo's hand : our dazed eyes
Have seen a new tinge in the western skies .
The world has done its duty. Yet, oh yet,
Although the sun of poesy is set,
These lovers did embrace, and we must weep
That there is no old power left to steep
A quill immortal in their joyous tears.
Long time ere silence did their anxious fears
Question that thus it was ; long time they lay
Fondling and kissing every doubt away ;
Long time ere soft caressing sobs began
To mellow into words, and then there ran
Two bubbling springs of talk from their sweet lips.
' O known Unknown ! from whom my being sips
Such darling essence, wherefore may I not
Be ever in these arms ? in this sweet spot
Pillow my chin for ever ? ever press
These toying hands and kiss their smooth excess ?
Why not for ever and for ever feel
That breath about my eyes ? Ah, thou wilt steal
Away from me again, indeed, indeed—
Thou wilt be gone away, and wilt not heed
My lonely madness. Speak, my kindest fair !
Is—is it to be so ? No ! Who will dare
To pluck thee from me ? And, of thine own will,
Full well I feel thou wouldst not leave me Still
Let me entwine thee surer, surer—now
How can we part ? Elysium ! who art thou ?
Who, that thou canst not be for ever here,
Or lift me with thee to some starry sphere ?
Enchantress ! tell me by this soft embrace,
By the most soft completion of thy face,
Those lips, O slippery blisses, twinkling eyes,
And by these tenderest, milky sovereignties—
These tenderest, and by the nectar-wine,
The passion '——' O lov'd Ida the divine !

Endymion ! dearest ! Ah, unhappy me !
His soul will 'scape us—O felicity !
How he does love me ! His poor temples beat
To the very tune of love—how sweet, sweet, sweet !
Revive, dear youth, or I shall faint and die ;
Revive, or these soft hours will hurry by
In tranced dulness ; speak, and let that spell
Affright this lethargy ! I cannot quell
Its heavy pressure, and will press at least
My lips to thine, that they may richly feast
Until we taste the life of love again.
What ! dost thou move ? dost kiss ? O bliss ! O pain !
I love thee, youth, more than I can conceive ;
And so long absence from thee doth bereave
My soul of any rest : yet must I hence :
Yet, can I not to starry eminence
Uplift thee ; nor for very shame can own
Myself to thee : Ah, dearest, do not groan
Or thou wilt force me from this secrecy,
And I must blush in heaven. O that I
Had done it already ; that the dreadful smiles
At my lost brightness, my impassion'd wiles,
Had waned from Olympus' solemn height,
And from all serious Gods ; that our delight
Was quite forgotten, save of us alone !
And wherefore so ashamed ? 'Tis but to atone
For endless pleasure, by some coward blushes :
Yet must I be a coward !—Horror rushes
Too palpable before me—the sad look
Of Jove—Minerva's start—no bosom shook
With awe of purity—no Cupid pinion
In reverence veiled—my crystalline dominion
Half lost, and all old hymns made nullity !
But what is this to love ? Oh ! I could fly
With thee into the ken of heavenly powers,
So thou wouldst thus, for many sequent hours,
Press me so sweetly. Now I swear at once
That I am wise, that Pallas is a dunce—

His weary limbs, bathing an hour's space,
And after, straight in that inspired place
He sang the story up into the air,
Giving it universal freedom. There
Has it been ever sounding for those ears
Whose tips are glowing hot. The legend cheers
Yon centinel stars ; and he who listens to it
Must surely be self-doom'd or he will rue it :
For quenchless burnings come upon the heart,
Made fiercer by a fear lest any part
Should be engulfed in the eddying wind
As much as here is penn'd doth always find
A resting-place, thus much comes clear and plain ;
Anon the strange voice is upon the wane—
And 'tis but echo'd from departing sound,
That the fair visitant at last unwound
Her gentle limbs, and left the youth asleep.—
Thus the tradition of the gusty deep.

Now turn we to our former chroniclers.—
Endymion awoke, that grief of hers
Sweet paining on his ear : he sickly guess'd
How lone he was once more ; and sadly press'd
His empty arms together, hung his head,
And most forlorn upon that widow'd bed
Sat silently. Love's madness he had known :
Often with more than tortured lion's groan
Moanings had burst from him ; but now that rage
Had pass'd away : no longer did he wage
A rough-voiced war against the dooming stars.
No, he had felt too much for such harsh jars :
The lyre of his soul Æolian-tuned
Forgot all violence, and but communed
With melancholy thought : O he had swoon'd
Drunken from pleasure's nipple ; and his love
Henceforth was dove-like.—Loth was he to move
From the imprinted couch, and when he did,
'Twas with slow, languid paces, and face hid

The Olympian eagle's vision, is dark,
Dark as the parentage of chaos. Hark !
My silent thoughts are echoing from these shells ;
Or they are but the ghosts, the dying swells
Of noises far away ?—list !—Hereupon
He kept an anxious ear. The humming tone
Came louder, and behold, there as he lay,
On either side outgush'd, with misty spray,
A copious spring ; and both together dash'd
Swift, mad, fantastic round the rocks, and lash'd
Among the conchs and shells of the lofty grot,
Leaving a trickling dew. At last they shot
Down from the ceiling's height, pouring a noise
As of some breathless racers whose hopes poise
Upon the last few steps, and with spent force
Along the ground they took a winding course.
Endymion follow'd—for it seem'd that one
Ever pursued, the other strove to shun—
Follow'd their languid mazes, till well-nigh
He had left thinking of the mystery,—
And was now rapt in tender hoverings
Over the vanish'd bliss. Ah ! what is it sings
His dream away ? What melodies are these ?
They sound as through the whispering of trees,
Not native in such barren vaults. Give ear !

'O Arethusa, peerless nymph ! why fear
Such tenderness as mine ? Great Dian, why,
Why didst thou hear her prayer ? O that I
Were rippling round her dainty fairness now,
Circling about her waist, and striving how
To entice her to a dive ! then stealing in
Between her luscious lips and eyelids thin.
O that her shining hair was in the sun,
And I distilling from it thence to run
In amorous rillets down her shrinking form !
To linger on her lily shoulders, warm
Between her kissing breasts, and every charm

Touch raptur'd !—See how painfully I flow :
 Fair maid, be pitiful to my great woe.
 Stay, stay thy weary course, and let me lead,
 A happy wooer, to the flowery mead
 Where all that beauty snar'd me.—'Cruel god,
 Desist ' or my offended mistress' nod
 Will stagnate all thy fountains :—tease me not
 With syren words—Ah, have I really got
 Such power to madden thee? And is it true—
 Away, away, or I shall dearly rue
 My very thoughts : in mercy then away,
 Kindest Alpheus, for should I obey
 My own dear will, 'twould be a deadly bane.'
 'O, Oread-Queen ! would that thou hadst a pain
 Like this of mine, then would I fearless turn
 And be a criminal.' 'Alas, I burn,
 I shudder—gentle river, get thee hence.
 Alpheus ! thou enchanter ! every sense
 Of mine was once made perfect in these woods.
 Fresh breezes, bowery lawns, and innocent floods,
 Ripe fruits, and lonely couch, contentment gave ;
 But ever since I heedlessly did lave
 In thy deceitful stream, a panting glow
 Grew strong within me : wherefore serve me so,
 And call it love ? Alas ! 'twas cruelty:
 Not once more did I close my happy eyes
 Amid the thrush's song. Away ! Avaunt !
 O 'twas a cruel thing.—'Now thou dost taunt
 So softly, Arethusa, that I think
 If thou wast playing on my shady brink,
 Thou wouldst bathe once again. Innocent maid !
 Stifle thine heart no more ;—nor be afraid
 Of angry powers : there are deities
 Will shade us with their wings. Those fitful sighs
 'Tis almost death to hear : O let me pour
 A dewy balm upon them !—fear no more,
 Sweet Arethusa ! Dian's self must feel,
 Sometimes, these very pangs Dear maiden, steal

Blushing into my soul, and let us fly
 These dreary caverns for the open sky.
 I will delight thee all my winding course,
 From the green sea up to my hidden source
 About Arcadian forests ; and will show
 The channels where my coolest waters flow
 Through mossy rocks ; where, 'mid exuberant green,
 I roam in pleasant darkness, more unseen
 Than Saturn in his exile ; where I brim
 Round flowery islands, and take thence a skim
 Of mealy sweets, which myriads of bees
 Buzz from their honeyed wings ; and thou shouldst
 please

Thyself to choose the richest, where we might
 Be incense-pillow'd every summer night.
 Doff all sad fears, thou white deliciousness,
 And let us be thus comforted ; unless
 Thou couldst rejoice to see my hopeless stream
 Hurry distracted from Sol's temperate beam,
 And pour to death along some hungry sands.—
 'What can I do, Alpheus ? Dian stands
 Severe before me : persecuting fate !
 Unhappy Arethusa ! thou wast late
 A huntress free in——' At this, sudden fell
 Those two sad streams adown a fearful dell.
 The Latmian listen'd, but he heard no more,
 Save echo, faint repeating o'er and o'er
 The name of Arethusa. On the verge
 Of that dark gulf he wept, and said : ' I urge
 Thee, gentle Goddess of my pilgrimage,
 By our eternal hopes, to soothe, to assuage,
 If thou art powerful, these lovers' pains ;
 And make them happy in some happy plains.

He turn'd—there was a whelming sound—he
 slept,
 There was a cooler light ; and so he kept

Towards it by a sandy path, and lo !
More suddenly than doth a moment go,
The visions of the earth were gone and fled—
He saw the giant sea above his head.

BOOK III

THERE are who lord it o'er their fellow-men
With most prevailing tinsel : who unpen
There baaing vanities, to browse away
The comfortable green and juicy hay
From human pastures ; or, O torturing fact !
Who, through an idiot blink, will see unpack'd
Fire-branded foxes to sear up and singe
Our gold and ripe-ear'd hopes With not one tinge
Of sanctuary splendour, not a sight
Able to face an owl's, they still are dight
By the blear-eyed nations in empurpled vests,
And crowns, and turbans With unladen breasts,
Save of blown self-applause, they proudly mount
To their spirit's perch, their being's high account,
Their tiptop nothings, their dull skies, their thrones—
Amid the fierce intoxicating tones
Of trumpets, shoutings, and belabour'd drums,
And sudden cannon. Ah ! how all this hums,
In wakeful ears, like uproar past and gone—
Like thunder-clouds that spake to Babylon,
And set those old Chaldeans to their tasks.—
Are then regalities all gilded masks ?
No, there are throned seats unscalable
But by a patient wing, a constant spell,
Or by ethereal things that, unconfined,
Can make a ladder of the eternal wind,
And poise about in cloudy thunder-tents
-Towatch the abysm-birth of elements.
Ay, 'bove the withering of old-lipp'd Fate
A thousand Powers keep religious state,

In water, fiery realm, and airy bourne ;
And, silent as a consecrated urn,
Hold sphery sessions for a season due.
Yet few of these far majesties, ah, few !
Have bared their operations to this globe—
Few, who with gorgeous pageantry enrobe
Our piece of heaven—whose benevolence
Shakes hand with our own Ceres, every sense
Filling with spiritual sweets to plenitude,
As bees gorge full their cells. And, by the feud
'Twixt Nothing and Creation, I here swear,
Eterne Apollo ! that thy Sister fair
Is of all these the gentler-mightiest
When thy gold breath is misting in the west,
She unobserved steals unto her throne,
And there she sits most weak and most alone ;
As if she had not pomp subservient ;
As if thine eye, high Poet ! was not bent
Towards her with the Muses in thine heart ;
As if the minist'ring stars kept not apart,
Waiting for silver-footed messages
O Moon ! the oldest shades 'mong oldest trees
Feel palpitations when thou lookest in .
O Moon ! old boughs hsp forth a holier din
The while they feel thine airy fellowship.
Thou dost bless everywhere, with silver lip
Kissing dead things to life. The sleeping kine,
Couch'd in thy brightness, dream of fields divine :
Innumerable mountains rise, and rise,
Ambitious for the hallowing of thine eyes ;
And yet thy benediction passeth not
One obscure hiding-place, one little spot
Where pleasure may be sent . the nested wren
Has thy fair face within its tranquil ken,
And from beneath a sheltering ivy leaf
Takes glimpses of thee ; thou art a relief
To the poor patient oyster, where it sleeps
Within its pearly house.—The mighty deeps,

The monstrous sea is thine—the myriad sea !
 O Moon ! far spooming Ocean bows to thee,
 And Tellus feels her forehead's cumbrous load

Cynthia ! where art thou now ? What far abode
 Of green or silvery bower doth enshrine
 Such utmost beauty ? Alas, thou dost pine
 For one as sorrowful : thy cheek is pale
 For one whose cheek is pale . thou dost bewail
 His tears who weeps for thee Where dost thou sigh ?
 Ah ! surely that light peeps from Vesper's eye,
 Or, what a thing is love ! 'Tis She, but lo !
 How chang'd, how full of ache, how gone in woe !
 She dies at the thinnest cloud , her loveliness
 Is wan on Neptune's blue . yet there's a stress
 Of love-spangles, just off , on cape of trees,
 Dancing upon the waves, as if to please
 The curly foam with amorous influence
 O, not so idle ! for down-glancing thence
 She fathoms eddies, and runs wild about
 O'erwhelming watercourses , scaring out
 The thorny sharks from hiding-holes, and fright'ning
 Their savage eyes with unaccustom'd lightning
 Where will the splendour be content to reach ?
 O love ! how potent hast thou been to teach
 Strange journeyings ! Wherever beauty dwells,
 In gulf or aerie, mountains or deep dells,
 In light, in gloom, in star or blazing sun,
 Thou pointest out the way, and straight 'tis won.
 Amid his toil thou gav'st Leander breath ;
 Thou leddest Orpheus through the gleams of death ;
 Thou madest Pluto bear thin element ;
 And now, O winged Chieftain ! thou hast sent
 A moonbeam to the deep, deep water-world,
 To find Endymion.

On gold sand impearl'd
 With lily shells, and pebbles milky white,
 Poor Cynthia greeted him, and sooth'd her light

Against his pallid face : he felt the charm
To breathlessness, and suddenly a warm
Of his heart's blood : 'twas very sweet ; he
stay'd

His wandering steps, and half-entranced laid
His head upon a tuft of straggling weeds,
To taste the gentle moon, and freshening beads,
Lash'd from the crystal roof by fishes' tails.
And so he kept, until the rosy veils
Mantling the east, by Aurora's peering hand
Were lifted from the water's breast, and fann'd
Into sweet air ; and sober'd morning came
Meekly through billows :—when like taper-flame
Left sudden by a dallying breath of air,
He rose in silence, and once more 'gan fare-
Along his fated way.

Far had he roam'd,
With nothing save the hollow vast, that foam'd,
Above, around, and at his feet ; save things
More dead than Morpheus' imaginings :
Old rusted anchors, helmets, breastplates large
Of gone sea-warriors ; brazen beaks and targe ;
Rudders that for a hundred years had lost
The sway of human hand ; gold vase emboss'd
With long-forgotten story, and wherein
No reveller had ever dipp'd a chin
But those of Saturn's vintage ; mouldering scrolls,
Writ in the tongue of heaven, by those souls
Who first were on the earth ; and sculptures
rude
In ponderous stone, developing the mood
Of ancient Nox ;—then skeletons of man,
Of beast, behemoth, and leviathan,
And elephant, and eagle, and huge jaw
Of nameless monster A cold leaden awe
These secrets struck into him ; and unless
Dian had chased away that heaviness,
J.K.

He might have died : but, now, with cheered feel,
He onward kept ; wooing these thoughts to steal
About the labyrinth in his soul of love.

‘ What is there in thee, Moon ’ that thou shouldst
move

My heart so potently ? When yet a child
I oft have dried my tears when thou hast smiled.
Thou seem’dst my sister : hand in hand we went
From eve to morn across the firmament.
No apples would I gather from the tree,
Till thou hadst cool’d their cheeks deliciously :
No tumbling water ever spake romance,
But when my eyes with thine thereon could dance :
No woods were green enough, no bower divine,
Until thou liftedst up thine eyelids fine :
In sowing time ne’er would I dabble take,
Or drop a seed, till thou wast wide awake ;
And, in the summer tide of blossoming,
No one but thee hath heard me blithely sing
And mesh my dewy flowers all the night.
No melody was like a passing spright
If it went not to solemnise thy reign.
Yes, in my boyhood, every joy and pain
By thee were fashion’d to the self-same end ;
And as I grew in years, still didst thou blend
With all my ardours : thou wast the deep glen ;
Thou wast the mountain-top—the sage’s pen—
The poet’s harp—the voice of friends—the sun ;
Thou wast the river—thou wast glory won ;
Thou wast my clarion’s blast—thou wast my steed—
My goblet full of wine—my topmost deed :—
Thou wast the charm of women, lovely Moon !
O what a wild and harmonised tune
My spirit struck from all the beautiful !
On some bright essence could I lean, and lull
Myself to immortality : I prest
Nature’s soft pillow in a wakeful rest.

But, gentle Orb ! there came a nearer bliss—
My strangè lovè came—Felicity's abyss !
She came, and thou didst fade, and fade away—
Yet not entirely ; no, thy starry sway
Has been an under-passion to this hour.
Now I begin to feel thine orby power
Is coming fresh upon me : O be kind !
Keep back thine influence, and do not blind
My sovereign vision.—Dearest love, forgive
That I can think away from thee and live !—
Pardon me, airy planet, that I prize
One thought beyond thine argent luxuries !
How far beyond !' At this a surpris'd start
Frosted the springing verdure of his heart ;
For as he lifted up his eyes to swear
How his own goddess was past all things fair,
He saw far in the concave green of the sea
An old man sitting calm and peacefully..
Upon a weeded rock this old man sat,
And his white hair was awful, and a mat
Of weeds were cold beneath his cold thin feet ;
And, ample as the largest winding-sheet,
A cloak of blue wrapp'd up his aged bones,
O'erwrought with symbols by the deepest groans
Of ambitious magic : every ocean-form
Was woven in with black distinctness ; storm,
And calm, and whispering, and hideous roar,
Were emblem'd in the woof ; with every shape
That skims, or dives, or sleeps, 'twixt cape and
cape
The gulping whale was like a dot in the spell,
Yet look upon it, and 'twould size and swell
To its huge self ; and the minutest fish
Would pass the very hardest gazer's wish,
And show his little eye's anatomy.
Then there was pictur'd the regality
Of Neptune ; and the sea-nymphs round his state,
In beauteous vassalage, look up and wait.

Beside this old man lay a pearly wand,
 And in his lap a book, the which he conn'd
 So steadfastly, that the new denizen
 Had time to keep him in amazed ken,
 To mark these shadowings, and stand in awe.

The old man rais'd his hoary head and saw
 The wilder'd stranger—seeming not to see,
 His features were so lifeless. Suddenly
 He woke as from a trance; his snow-white brows
 Went arching up, and like two magic ploughs
 Furrow'd deep wrinkles in his forehead large,
 Which kept as fixedly as rocky marge,
 Till round his wither'd lips had gone a smile.
 Then up he rose, like one whose tedious toil
 Had watch'd for years in forlorn hermitage,
 Who had not from mid-life to utmost age
 Eased in one accent his o'erburden'd soul,
 Even to the trees. He rose : he grasp'd his stole,
 With convuls'd clenches waving it abroad,
 And in a voice of solemn joy, that awed
 Echo into oblivion, he said :—

'Thou art the man ! Now shall I lay my head
 In peace upon my watery pillow : now
 Sleep will come smoothly to my weary brow.
 O Jove ! I shall be young again, be young !
 O shell-borne Neptune, I am pierc'd and stung
 With new-born life ! What shall I do ? Where go,
 When I have cast this serpent-skin of woe?—
 I'll swim to the syrens; and one moment listen
 Their melodies, and see their long hair glisten ;
 Anon upon that giant's arm I'll be,
 That writhes about the roots of Sicily :
 To northern seas I'll in a twinkling sail,
 And mount upon the snortings of a whale
 To some black cloud ; thence down I'll madly sweep
 On forked lightning, to the deepest deep,

Where through some sucking pool I will be hurl'd
With rapture to the other side of the world!
O, I am full of gladness! Sisters three,
I bow full-hearted to your old decree!
Yes, every god be thank'd, and power benign,
For I no more shall wither, droop, and pine.
Thou art the man!' Endymion started back
Dismay'd; and, like a wretch from whom the rack
Tortures hot breath, and speech of agony,
Mutter'd: 'What lonely death am I to die
In this cold region? Will he let me freeze,
And float my brittle limbs o'er polar seas?
Or will he touch me with his searing hand,
And leave a black memorial on the sand?
Or tear me piecemeal with a bony saw,
And keep me as a chosen food to draw
His magian fish through hated fire and flame?
O misery of hell! resistless, tame,
Am I to be burnt up? No, I will shout,
Until the gods through heaven's blue look out!—
O Tartarus! but some few days ago
Her soft arms were entwining me, and on
Her voice I hung like fruit among green leaves:
Her lips were all my own, and—ah, ripe sheave.
Of happiness! ye on the stubble droop,
But never may be garner'd. I must stoop
My head, and kiss death's foot. Love! love, farewell!
Is there no hope from thee? This horrid spell
Would melt at thy sweet breath.—By Dian's hind
Feeding from her white fingers, on the wind
I see thy streaming hair! and now, by Pan,
I care not for this old-mysterious man!'

He spake, and walking to that aged form,
Look'd high defiance Lo! his heart 'gan warm
With pity, for the gray-hair'd creature wept.
Had he then wrong'd a heart where sorrow kept?

Had he, though blindly contumelious, brought
 Rheum to kind eyes, a sting to human thought,
 Convulsion to a mouth of many years?
 He had in truth ; and he was ripe for tears.
 The penitent shower fell, as down he knelt
 Before that care-worn sage, who trembling felt
 About his large dark locks, and faltering spake :

‘ Arise, good youth, for sacred Phœbus’ sake !
 I know thine inmost bosom, and I feel
 A very brother’s yearning for thee steal
 Into mine own : for why ? thou openest
 The prison-gates that have so long oppress
 My weary watching. Though thou know’st it
 not

Thou art commission’d to this fated spot
 For great enfranchisement. O weep no more ;
 I am a friend to love, to loves of yore :
 Ay, hadst thou never lov’d an unknown power,
 I had been grieving at this joyous hour.
 But even now most miserable old,
 I saw thee, and my blood no longer cold
 Gave mighty pulses : in this tottering case
 Grew a new heart, which at this moment plays
 As dancingly as thine Be not afraid,
 For thou shalt hear this secret all display’d,
 Now as we speed towards our joyous task.’

So saying, this young soul in age’s mask
 Went forward with the Carian side by side :
 Resuming quickly thus ; while ocean’s tide
 Hung swollen at their backs, and jewell’d sands
 Took silently their footprints.

‘ My soul stands

Now past the midway from mortality,
 - And so I can prepare without a sigh
 To tell thee briefly all my joy and pain.
 I was a fisher once, upon this main, .

And my boat danc'd in every creek and bay ;
Rough billows were my home by night and
day,—

The seagulls not more constant ; for I had
No housing from the storm and tempests mad,
But hollow rocks,—and they were palaces
Of silent happiness, of slumberous ease :
Long years of misery have told me so.
Ay, thus it was one thousand years ago.
One thousand years !—Is it then possible
To look so plainly through them ? to dispel
At housand years with backward glance sublime ?
To breathe away as 'twere all scummy slime
From off a crystal pool, to see its deep,
And one's own image from the bottom peep ?
Yes . now I am no longer wretched thrall,
My long captivity and moanings all
Are but a slime, a thin-pervading scum,
The which I breathe away ; and thronging come
Like things of yesterday my youthful pleasures.

'I touched no lute, I sang not, trod no measures :
I was a lonely youth on desert shores.

My sports were lonely, 'mid continuous roars,
And craggy isles, and sea-mews' plaintive cry
Plaining discrepant between sea and sky.

Dolphins were still my playmates ; shapes unseen
Would let me feel their scales of gold and green,
Nor be my desolation ; and, full oft,

When a dread waterspout had rear'd aloft
Its hungry hugeness, seeming ready ripe

To burst with hoarsest thunderings, and wipe
My life away like a vast sponge of fate,

Some friendly monster, pitying my sad state,
Has dived to its foundations, gulfed it down,

And left me tossing safely. But the crown
Of all my life was utmost quietude :

More did I love to lie in cavern rude,

Keeping in wait whole days for Neptune voice,
And if it came at last, hark, and rejoice !
There blush'd no summer eve but I would steer
My skiff along green shelving coasts, to hear
The shepherd's pipe come clear from aery steep,
Mingled with ceaseless bleatings of his sheep :
And never was a day of summer shine,
But I beheld its birth upon the brine :
For I would watch all night to see unfold
Heaven's gates, and Æthon snort his morning
gold

Wide o'er the swelling streams : and constantly
At brim of day-tide, on some grassy lea,
My nets would be spread out, and I at rest.
The poor folk of the sea-country I blest
With daily boon of fish most delicate
They knew not whence this bounty, and elate
Would strew sweet flowers on a sterile beach

‘ Why was I not contented ? Wherefore reach
At things which, but for thee, O Latmian¹
Had been my dreary death ? Fool ! I began
To feel distemper'd longings : to desire
The utmost privilege that ocean's sire
Could grant in benediction : to be free
Of all his kingdom. Long in misery
I wasted, ere in one extremest fit
I plung'd for life or death. To interknit
One's senses with so dense a breathing stuff
Might seem a work of pain ; so not enough
Can I admire how crystal-smooth it felt,
And buoyant round my limbs. At first I dwelt
Whole days and days in sheer astonishment ;
Forgetful utterly of self-intent ;
Moving but with the mighty ebb and flow.
Then, like a new-fledg'd bird that first doth show
His spreaded feathers to the morrow chill,
I tried in fear the pinions of my will.

'Twas freedom ! and at once I visited
 The ceaseless wonders of this ocean-bed.
 No need to tell thee of them, for I-see
 That thou hast been a witness—it must be—
 For these I know thou canst not feel a diouth,
 By the melancholy corners of that mouth.
 So I will in my story straightway pass
 To more immediate matter. Woe, alas !
 That love should be my bane ! Ah, Scylla fair !
 Why did poor Glaucus ever—ever dare
 To sue thee to his heart ? Kind stranger-youth !
 I lov'd her to the very white of truth,
 And she would not conceive it. Timid thing !
 She fled me swift as sea-bird on the wing,
 Round every isle, and point, and promontory,
 From where large Hercules wound up his story
 Far as Egyptian Nile. My passion grew
 The more, the more I saw her dainty hue
 Gleam delicately through the azure clear :
 Until 'twas too fierce agony to bear ;
 And in that agony, across my grief
 It flash'd, that Circe might find some relief—
 Cruel enchantress ! So above the water
 I rear'd my head, and look'd for Phœbus' daughter.
 Ææa's isle was wondering at the moon :—
 It seem'd to whirl around me, and a swoon
 Left me dead-drifting to that fatal power.

' When I awoke, 'twas in a twilight bower ;
 Just when the light of morn, with hum of bees,
 Stole through its verdurous matting of fresh trees.
 How sweet, and sweeter ! for I heard a lyre,
 And over it a sighing voice expire.
 It ceased—I caught light footsteps ; and anon
 The fairest face that morn e'er look'd upon
 Push'd through a screen of roses. Starry Jove !
 With tears, and smiles, and honey-words she
 wove

A net whose thraldom was more bliss than all
 ' The range of flower'd Elysium. Thus did fall
 ' The dew of her rich speech · ' Ah ' art awake?
 ' O let me hear thee speak, for Cupid's sake '
 ' I am so oppress'd with joy ! Why, I have shed
 ' An urn of tears, as though thou wert cold dead ,
 ' And now I find thee living, I will pour
 ' From these devoted eyes their silver store,
 ' Until exhausted of the latest drop,
 ' So it will pleasure thee, and force thee stop
 ' Here, that I too may live . but if beyond
 ' Such cool and sorrowful offerings, thou art fond
 ' Of soothing warmth, of dalliance supreme ;
 ' If thou art ripe to taste a long love-dream ,
 ' If smiles, if dimples, tongues for ardour mute,
 ' Hang in thy vision like a tempting fruit,
 ' O let me pluck it for thee.' Thus she link'd
 Her charming syllables, till indistinct
 Their music came to my o'er-sweeten'd soul ;
 And then she hover'd over me, and stole
 So near, that if no nearer it had been
 This furrow'd visage thou hadst never seen.

' Young man of Latmos ' thus particular
 Am I, that thou may'st plainly see how far
 This fierce temptation went · and thou may'st not
 Exclaim, How then, was Scylla quite forgot ?

' Who could resist ? Who in this universe ?
 She did so breathe ambrosia ; so immerse
 My fine existence in a golden chime.
 She took me like a child of suckling time,
 And cradled me in roses. Thus condemn'd,
 The current of my former life was stemm'd,
 And to this arbitrary queen of sense
 I bow'd a tranced-vassal . nor would thence
 Have moved, even though Amphion's harp had woo'd
 Me back to Scylla o'er the billows rude.

For as Apollo each eve doth devise
A new apparelling for western skies ;
So every eve, nay every spendthrift hour
Shed balmy consciousness within that bower.
And I was free of haunts umbrageous ;
Could wander in the mazy forest-house
Of squirrels, foxes shy, and antler'd deer,
And birds from coverts innermost and drear
Warbling for very joy mellifluous sorrow—
To me new-born delights !

‘ Now let me borrow,
For moments few, a temperament as stern
As Pluto's sceptre, that my words not burn
These uttering lips, while I in calm speech tell
How specious heaven was changed to real hell.

‘ One morn she left me sleeping . half awake
I sought for her smooth arms and lips, to slake .
My greedy thirst with nectarous camel-draughts ;
But she was gone. Whereat the barbed shafts
Of disappointment stuck in me so sore,
That out I ran and search'd the forest o'er.
Wandering about in pine and cedar gloom
Damp awe assaul'd me ; for there 'gan to boom
A sound of moan, an agony of sound,
Sepulchral from the distance all around.
Then came a conquering earth-thunder, and rumbled
That fierce complain to silence : while I stumbled
Down a precipitous path, as if impell'd.
I came to a dark valley.—Groanings swell'd
Poisonous about my ears, and louder grew,
The nearer I approach'd a flame's gaunt blue,
That glar'd before me through a thorny brake.
This fire, like the eye of gordian snake,
Bewitch'd me towards , and I soon was near
A sight too fearful for the feel of fear :

In thicket hid I curs'd the haggard scene—
The banquet of my arms, my arbour queen,
Seated upon an uptorn forest root ;
And all around her shapes, wizard and brute,
Laughing, and wailing, grovelling, serpentine,
Showing tooth, tusk, and venom-bag, and sting !
O such deformities ! Old Charon's self,
Should he give up awhile his penny pelf,
And take a dream 'mong rushes Stygian,
It could not be so phantasied. Fierce, wan,
And tyrannising was the lady's look,
As over them a gnarled staff she shook.
 Oft-times upon the sudden she laugh'd out,
And from a basket emptied to the rout
Clusters of grapes, the which they raven'd quick
And roar'd for more ; with many a hungry lick
About their shaggy jaws. . . Avenging, slow,
Anon she took a branch of mistletoe,
And emptied on 't a black dull-gurgling phial :
Groan'd one and all, as if some piercing trial
Was sharpening for their pitiable bones
She lifted up the charm : appealing groans
From their poor breasts went suing to her ear
In vain ; remorseless as an infant's-bier
She whisk'd against their eyes the sooty oil.
Whereat was heard a noise of painful toil,
Increasing gradual to a tempest rage,
Shrieks, yells, and groans of torture-pilgrimage
Until their griev'd bodies 'gan to bloat
And puff from the tail's end to stifled throat :
Then was appalling silence : then a sight
More wildering than all that hoarse affright ;
For the whole herd, as by a whirlwind writhen,
Went through the dismal air like one huge Python
Antagonising Boreas,—and so vanish'd.
Yet there was not a breath of wind . she banish'd
These phantoms with a nod Lo ! from the dark
Came waggish fauns, and nymphs, and satyrs stark,

With dancing and loud revelry,—and went
Swifter than centaurs after rapine bent.—
Sighing an elephant appear'd and bow'd
Before the fierce witch, speaking thus aloud
In human accent : " Potent goddess ! chief
" Of pains resistless ! make my being brief,
" Or let me from this heavy prison fly :
" Or give me to the air, or let me die !
" I sue not for my happy crown again ;
" I sue not for my phalanx on the plain ;
" I sue not for my lone, my widow'd wife ;
" I sue not for my ruddy drops of life,
" My children fair, my lovely girls and boys !
" I will forget them ; I will pass these joys ;
" Ask nought so heavenward, so too—too high :
" Only I pray, as fairest boon, to die,
" Or be deliver'd from this cumbrous flesh,
" From this gross, detestable, filthy mesh,
" And merely given to the cold bleak air.
" Have mercy, Goddess ! Circe, feel my prayer ! "

" That curst magician's name fell icy numb
Upon my wild conjecturing : truth had come
Naked and sabre-like against my heart.
I saw a fury whetting a death-dart ;
And my slain spirit, overwrought with fright,
Fainted away in that dark lair of night.
Think, my deliverer, how desolate
My waking must have been ! disgust, and hate,
And terrors manifold divided me
A spoil amongst them. I prepar'd to flee
Into the dungeon core of that wild wood :
I fled three days—when lo ! before me stood
Glaring the angry witch. O Dis, even now,
A clammy dew is beading on my brow,
At mere remembering her pale laugh, and curse.
" Ha ! ha ! Sir Dainty ! there must be a nurse

"Made of rose leaves and thistledown, express,
"To cradle thee, my sweet, and lull thee: yes,
"I am too flinty-hard for thy nice touch:
"My tenderest squeeze is but a giant's clutch.
"So, fairy-thing, it shall have lullabies
"Unheard of yet: and it shall still its cries -
"Upon some breast more lily-feminine.
"Oh, no—it shall not pine, and pine, and pine
"More than one pretty, trifling thousand years;
"And then 'twere pity, but fate's gentle shears
"Cut short its immortality. Sea-flirt!
"Young dove of the waters! truly I'll not hurt
"One hair of thine: see how I weep and sigh,
"That our heart-broken parting is so nigh.
"And must we part? Ah, yes, it must be so.
"Yet ere thou leavest me in utter woe,
"Let me sob over thee my last adieus,
"And speak a blessing: Mark me! Thou hast thews
"Immortal, for thou art of heavenly race:
"But such a love is mine, that here I chase
"Eternally away from thee all bloom
"Of youth, and destine thee towards a tomb.
"Hence shalt thou quickly to the watery vast,
"And there, ere many days be overpast,
"Disabled age shall seize thee, and even then
"Thou shalt not go the way of aged men;
"But live and wither, cripple and still breathe
"Ten hundred years: which gone, I then bequeath
"Thy fragile bones to unknown burial.
"Adieu, sweet love, adieu!"—As shot stars fall,
She fled ere I could groan for mercy. Stung.
And poison'd was my spirit: despair sung
A war-song of defiance 'gainst all hell.
A hand was at my shoulder to compel
My sullen steps; another 'fore my eyes
Moved on with pointed finger. In this guise
Enforced, at the last by ocean's foam
I found me; by my fresh, my native home.

Its tempering coolness, to my life akin,
Came salutary as I waded in ;
And, with a blind voluptuous rage, I gave
Battle to the swollen billow-ridge, and drave
Large froth before me, while there yet remain'd
Hale strength, nor from my bones all marrow drain'd

'Young lover, I must weep—such hellish spite
With dry cheek who can tell? While thus my might
Proving upon this element, dismay'd,
Upon a dead thing's face my hand I laid ;
I look'd—'twas Scylla! Cursed, cursed Circe!
O vulture-witch, hast never heard of mercy?
Could not thy harshest vengeance be content,
But thou must nip this tender innocent
Because I lov'd her?—Cold, O cold indeed
Were her fair limbs, and like a common weed
The sea-swell took her hair. Dead as she was
I clung about her waist, nor ceased to pass
Fleet as an arrow through unfathom'd brine,
Until there shone a fabric crystalline,
Ribb'd and inlaid with coral, pebble, and pearl.
Headlong I darted ; at one eager swirl
Gain'd its bright portal, enter'd, and behold !
'Twas vast, and desolate, and icy-cold,
And all around—— But wherefore this to thee
Who in few minutes more thyself shalt see?—
I left poor Scylla in a niche and fled.
My fever'd parchings up, my scathing dread
Met palsy half-way : soon these limbs became
Gaunt, wither'd, sapless, feeble, cramp'd, and lame.

'Now let me pass a cruel, cruel space,
Without one hope, without one faintest trace
Of mitigation, or redeeming bubble
Of colour'd phantasy ; for I fear 'twould trouble
Thy brain to loss of reason : and next tell
How a restoring chance came down to quell
One half of the witch in me

‘ On a day,
Sitting upon a rock above the spray,
I saw grow up from the horizon’s brink
A gallant vessel : soon she seem’d to sink
Away from me again, as though her course
Had been resumed in spite of hindering force—
So vanish’d : and not long, before arose
Dark clouds, and muttering of winds morose.
Old Æolus would stifle his mad spleen,
But could not : therefore all the billows green
Toss’d up the silver spume against the clouds.
The tempest came : I saw that vessel’s shrouds
In perilous bustle ; while upon the deck
Stood trembling creatures. I beheld the wreck ;
The final gulfin’g ; the poor struggling souls :
I heard their cries amid loud thunder-rolls.
O they had all been sav’d but crazed eld
Annull’d my vigorous cravings : and thus quell’d
And curb’d, think on ’t, O Latmian ! did I sit
Writhing with pity, and a cursing fit
Against that hell-born Circe. The crew had gone,
By one and one, to pale oblivion ;
And I was gazing on the surges prone,
With many a scalding tear and many a groan,
When at my feet emerg’d an old man’s hand,
Grasping this scroll, and this same slender wand.
I knelt with pain—reach’d out my hand—had grasp’d
These treasures—touch’d the knuckles—they unclasp’d—
I caught a finger : but the downward weight
O’erpowered me—it sank. Then ’gan abate
The storm, and through chill aguish gloom outburst
The comfortable sun. I was athirst
To search the book, and in the warming air
Parted its dripping leaves with eager care.
Strange matters did it treat of, and drew on
My soul page after page, till well-nigh won
Into forgetfulness ; when, stupefied,
I read these words, and read again, and tried

My eyes against the heavens, and read again.
O what a load of misery and pain
Each Atlas-line bore off!—a shine of hope
Came gold around me, cheering me to cope
Strenuous with hellish tyranny. Attend!
For thou hast brought their promise to an end.

“In the wide sea there lives a forlorn wretch,
Doom'd with enfeebled carcass to outstretch
His loathed existence through ten centuries,
And then to die alone. Who can devise
A total opposition? No one. So
One million times ocean must ebb and flow,
And he oppressed. Yet he shall not die,
These things accomplish'd :—If he utterly
Scans all the depths of magic, and expounds
The meanings of all motions, shapes and sounds;
If he explores all forms and substances
Straight homeward to their symbol-essences;
He shall not die. Moreover, and in chief,
He must pursue this task of joy and grief
Most piously ;—all lovers tempest-tost,
And in the savage overwhelming lost,
He shall deposit side by side, until
Time's creeping shall the dreary space fulfil :
Which done, and all these labours ripened,
A youth, by heavenly power lov'd and led,
Shall stand before him ; whom he shall direct
How to consummate all. The youth elect
Must do the thing, or both will be destroy'd.”—

‘Then,’ cried the young Endymion, overjoy’d,
‘We are twin brothers in this destiny !
Say I, entreat thee, what achievement high
Is, in this restless world, for me reserved
What ! if from thee my wandering feet had swerve
Had we both perish’d ?’—‘Look !’ the sage replied
‘Dost thou not mark a gleaming through the tide

Of diverse brilliances? 'tis the edifice
 I told thee of, where lovely Scylla lies,
 And where I have enshrined piously
 All lovers, whom fell storms have doom'd to die
 Throughout my bondage.' Thus discoursing, on
 They went till unobscur'd the porches shone,
 Which hurryingly they gain'd, and enter'd straight.
 Sure never since king Neptune held his state
 Was seen such wonder underneath the stars.
 Turn to some level plain where haughty Mars
 Has legion'd all his battle; and behold
 How every soldier, with firm foot, doth hold
 His even breast. see, many steeled squares,
 And rigid ranks of iron—whence who dares
 One step? Imagine further, line by line,
 These warrior thousands on the field supine.—
 So in that crystal place, in silent rows,
 Poor lovers lay at rest from joys and woes —
 The stranger from the mountains, 'breathless, trac'd
 Such thousands of shut eyes in order plac'd,
 Such ranges of white feet, and patient lips
 All ruddy,—for here death no blossom nips.
 He mark'd their brows and foreheads; saw their hair
 Put sleekly-on one side with nicest care;
 And each one's gentle wrists, with reverence,
 Put cross-wise to its heart.

' Let us commence,'

Whisper'd the guide, stuttering with joy, 'even now.'
 He spake, and, trembling like an aspen-bough,
 Began to tear his scroll in pieces small,
 Uttering the while some mumblings funeral.
 He tore it into pieces small as snow
 That drifts unfeather'd when bleak northerns blow;
 And having done it, took his dark blue cloak
 And bound it round Endymion. then struck
 His wand against the empty air times nine.—
 'What more there is to do, young man, is thine:

But first a little patience ; first undo
This tangled thread, and wind it to a clue.
Ah, gentle ! 'tis as weak as spider's skein ;
And shouldst thou break it—What, is it done so clean?
A power overshadows thee ! Oh, brave !
The spite of hell is tumbling to its grave.
Here is a shell ; 'tis pearly blank to me,
Nor mark'd with any sign or character—
Canst thou read aught ? O read for pity's sake !
Olympus ! we are safe ! Now, Carian, break
This wand against yon lyre on the pedestal.'

'Twas done: and straight with sudden swell and fall
Sweet music breath'd her soul away, and sigh'd
A lullaby to silence.—' Youth ! now strew
These minced leaves on me, and passing through
Those files of dead, scatter the same around,
And thou wilt see the issue.'—'Mid the sound
Of flutes and viols, ravishing his heart,
Endymion from Glæucus stood apart,
And scatter'd in his face some fragments light.
How lightning-swift the change ! a youthful wight
Smiling beneath a coral diadem,
Out-sparkling sudden like an upturn'd gem,
Appear'd, and, stepping to a beauteous corse,
Kneel'd down beside it, and with tenderest force
Press'd its cold hand, and wept,—and Scylla sigh'd !
Endymion, with quick hand, the charm applied—
The nymph arose : he left them to their joy,
And onward went upon his high employ,
Showering those powerful fragments on the dead
And, as he pass'd, each lifted up his head,
As doth a flower at Apollo's touch.
Death felt it to his inwards : 'twas too much
Death fell a-weeping in his charnel-house.
The Latmian persever'd along, and thus
All were re-animated . There arose
A noise of harmony, pulses and throes

Of gladness in the air—while many, who
 Had died in mutual arms devout and true,
 Sprang to each other madly ; and the rest
 Felt a high certainty of being blest.
 They gaz'd upon Endymion: Enchantment
 Grew drunken, and would have its head and bent.
 Delicious symphonies, like airy flowers,
 Budded, and swell'd, and, full-blown, shed full shower
 Of light, soft, unseen leaves of sounds divine
 The two deliverers tasted a pure wine
 Of happiness, from fairy-press oozed out.
 Speechless they eyed each other, and about
 The fair assembly wander'd to and fro,
 Distracted with the richest overflow
 Of joy that ever pour'd from heaven.

——' Away ! '

Shouted the new-born god ; ' follow, and pay
 Our piety to Neptunus supreme ! '—
 Then Scylla, blushing sweetly from her dream,
 They led on first, bent to her meek surprise,
 Through portal columns of a giant size,
 Into the vaulted, boundless emerald.
 Joyous all follow'd, as the leader call'd,
 Down marble steps ; pouring as easily
 As hour-glass sand,—and fast, as you might see
 Swallows obeying the south summer's call,
 Or swans upon a gentle waterfall.

Thus went that beautiful multitude, nor far,
 Ere from among some rocks of glittering spar,
 Just within ken, they saw descending thick
 Another multitude. Whereat more quick
 Moved either host. On a wide sand they met,
 And of those numbers every eye was wet ;
 For each their old love found. A murmuring rose,
 Like what was never heard in all the throes
 Of wind and waters : 'tis past human wit
 To tell ; 'tis dizziness to think of it.

This mighty consummation made, the host
Mov'd on for many a league ; and gain'd, and lost
Huge sea-marks ; vanward swelling in array,
And from the rear diminishing away, —
Till a faint dawn surprised them. Glaucus cried,
' Behold ! behold, the palace of his pride !
God Neptune's palaces ! ' With noise increased,
They shoulder'd on towards that brightening east.
At every onward step proud domes arose
In prospect, — diamond gleams, and golden glows
Of amber 'gainst their faces levelling.
Joyous, and many as the leaves in spring,
Still onward ; still the splendour gradual swell'd.
Rich opal domes were seen, on high upheld
By jasper pillars, letting through their shafts
A blush of coral. Copious wonder-draughts
Each gazer drank ; and deeper drank more near :
For what poor mortals fragment up, as mere
As marble was there lavish, to the vast
Of one fair palace, that far, far surpass'd,
Even for common bulk, those olden three, —
Memphis, and Babylon, and Nineveh.

As large, as bright, as colour'd as the bow
Of Iris, when unfading it doth show
Beyond a silvery shower, was the arch
Through which this Paphian army took its march,
Into the outer courts of Neptune's state :
Whence could be seen, direct, a golden gate,
To which the leaders sped ; but not half raught
Ere it burst open swift as fairy thought,
And made those dazzled thousands veil their eyes
Like callow eagles at the first sunrise
Soon with an eagle nativeness their gaze
Ripe from hue-golden swoons took all the blaze,
And then, behold ! large Neptune on his throne
Of emerald deep : yet not exalt alone ;
At his right hand stood winged Love, and on
His left sat smiling Beauty's paragon.

Far as the mariner on highest mast
 Can see all round upon the calmed vast,
 So wide was Neptune's hall · and as the blue
 Doth vault the waters, so the waters drew
 Their doming curtains, high, magnificent,
 Aw'd from the throne aloof;—and when storm-rent
 Disclos'd the thunder-gloomings in Jove's air;
 But soothed as now, flash'd sudden everywhere,
 Noiseless, submarine cloudlets, glittering
 Death to a human eye: for there did spring
 From natural west, and east, and south, and north,
 A light as of four sunsets, blazing forth
 A gold-green zenith 'bove the Sea-God's head.
 Of lucid depth the floor, and far outspread
 As breezeless lake, on which the slim canoe
 Of feather'd Indian darts about, as through
 The delicatest air: air verily,
 But for the portraiture of clouds and sky:
 This palace floor breath-air,—but for the amaze
 Of deep-seen wonders motionless,—and blaze
 Of the dome pomp, reflected in extremes,
 Globing a golden sphere.

They stood in dreams

Till Triton blew his horn. The palace rang,
 The Nereids danced, the Syrens faintly sang;
 And the great Sea-King bow'd his dripping head.
 Then Love took wing, and from his pinions shed
 On all the multitude a nectarous dew
 The ooze-born Goddess beckoned and drew
 Fair Scylla and her guides to conference;
 And when they reach'd the throned eminence
 She kiss'd the sea-nymph's cheek,—who sat her down
 A-toying with the doves Then,—'Mighty crown
 And sceptre of this kingdom!' Venus said,
 'Thy vows were on a time to Nais paid.
 Behold!'—Two copious tear-drops instant fell
 From the God's large eyes; he smil'd delectable,

And over Glaucus held his blessing hands.—
‘Endymion! Ah! still wandering in the bands
Of Love? Now this is cruel.’ Since the hour
I met thee in earth’s bosom, all my power
Have I put forth to serve thee. What, not yet
Escap’d from dull mortality’s harsh net?
A little patience, youth! ’twill not be long,
Or I am skillless quite: an idle tongue,
A humid eye, and steps luxurious,
Where these are new and strange, are ominous.
Ay, I have seen these signs in one of heaven,
When others were all blind: and were I given
To utter secrets, haply I might say
Some pleasant words: but Love will have his day.
So wait awhile expectant: Pr’ythee soon,
Even in the passing of thine honeymoon,
Visit my Cytherea: thou wilt find
Cupid well-natured, my Adonis kind;
And pray persuade with thee,—Ah, I have done,
All blisses be upon thee, my sweet son!—
Thus the fair goddess: while Endymion
Knelt to receive those accents halcyon.

Meantime a glorious revelry began
Before the Water-Monarch. Nectar ran
In courteous fountains to all cups outreach’d;
And plunder’d vines, teeming exhaustless, pleach’d
New growth about each shell and pendent lyre;
The which, in disentangling for their fire,
Pull’d down fresh foliage and coverture
For dainty toying. Cupid, empire-sure,
Flutter’d and laugh’d, and oft-times through the
throng
Made a delighted way Then dance, and song,
And garlanding grew wild; and pleasure reign’d.
In harmless tendril they each other chain’d,
And strove who should be smother’d deepest in
Fresh crush of leaves.

O 'tis a very sin
 For one so weak to venture his poor verse
 In such a place as this. O do not curse,
 High Muses! let him hurry to the ending.

All suddenly were silent A soft blending
 Of dulcet instruments came charmingly;
 And then a hymn.

' KING of the stormy sea!
 Brother of Jove, and co-inheritor
 Of elements! Eternally before
 Thee the waves awful bow. Fast, stubborn rock
 At thy fear'd trident shrinking, doth unlock
 Its deep foundations, hissing into foam.
 All mountain-rivers lost, in the wide home
 Of thy capacious bosom ever flow.
 Thou frownest, and old Æolus thy foe
 Skulks to his cavern, 'mid the gruff complaint
 Of all his rebel tempests. Dark clouds faint
 When, from thy diadem, a silver gleam
 Slants over blue dominion. Thy bright team
 Gulfs in the morning light, and scuds along
 To bring thee nearer to that golden song
 Apollo singeth, while his chariot
 Waits at the doors of heaven Thou art not
 For scenes like this: an empire stern hast thou;
 And it hath furrow'd that large front: yet now,
 As newly come of heaven, dost thou sit
 To blend and interknit
 Subdued majesty with this glad time.
 O shell-borne King sublime!
 We lay our hearts before thee evermore—
 We sing, and we adore!

' Breathe softly, flutes;
 Be tender of your strings, ye soothing lutes,
 Nor be the trumpet heard! O vain, O vain;
 Not flowers budding in an April rain,

Nor breath of sleeping dove, nor river's flow,—
No, nor the Æolian twang of Love's own bow,
Can mingle music fit for the soft ear
Of goddess Cytherea!
Yet deign, white Queen of Beauty, thy fair eyes
On our souls' sacrifice.

‘Bright-winged Child!
Who has another care when thou hast smil'd?
Unfortunates on earth, we see at last
All death-shadows, and glooms that overcast
Our spirits, fann'd away by thy light pinions.
O sweetest essence! sweetest of all minions!
God of warm pulses, and dishevell'd hair,
And panting bosoms bare!
Dear unseen light in darkness! eclipser
Of light in light! delicious poisoner!
Thy venom'd goblet will we quaff until
We fill—we fill!
And by thy Mother's lips—’

Was heard no more
For clamour, when the golden palace door
Opened again, and from without, in shone
A new magnificence. On dozy throne
Smooth-moving came Oceanus the old,
To take a latest glimpse at his sheepfold,
Before he went into his quiet cave
To muse for ever—Then a lucid wave,
Scoop'd from its trembling sisters of midsea,
Afloat, and pillowing up the majesty
Of Doris, and the Ægean seer, her spouse—
Next, on a dolphin, clad in laurel boughs,
Theban Amphion leaning on his lute:
His fingers went across it—All were mute
To gaze on Amphitrite, queen of pearls,
And Thetis pearly too.—

The palace whirls

Around giddy Endymion ; seeing he
Was there far strayed from mortality.
He could not bear it—shut his eyes in vain ;
Imagination gave a dizzier pain.
' O I shall die ! sweet Venus, be my stay !
Where is my lovely mistress ? Well-away !
I die—I hear her voice—I feel my wing—
At Neptune's feet he sank. A sudden ring
Of Nereids were about him, in kind strife
To usher back his spirit into life :
But still he slept. At last they interwove
Their cradling arms, and purpos'd to convey
Towards a crystal bower far away.

Lo ! while slow carried through the pitying crowd,
To his inward senses these words spake aloud ;
Written in starlight on the dark above .
Dearest Endymion ! my entire love !
How have I dwelt in fear of fate : 'tis done—
Immortal bliss for me too hast thou won.
Arise then ! for the hen-dove shall not hatch
Her ready eggs, before I'll kissing snatch
Thee into endless heaven. Awake ! awake !

The youth at once arose : a placid lake
Came quiet to his eyes ; and forest green,
Cooler than all the wonders he had seen,
Lull'd with its simple song his fluttering breast.
How happy once again in grassy nest !

BOOK IV

MUSE of my native land ! loftiest Muse !
O first-born on the mountains ! by the hues
Of heaven on the spiritual air begot
Long didst thou sit alone in northern grot,
While yet our England was a wolfish den ;
Before our forests heard the talk of men ;
Before the first of Druids was a child ;—
Long didst thou sit amid our regions wild
Rapt in a deep prophetic solitude.
There came an eastern voice of solemn mood :—
Yet wast thou patient. Then sang forth the Nine,
Apollo's garland :—yet didst thou divine.
Such home-bred glory, that they cry in vain,
' Come hither, Sister of the Island ! ' Plain
Spake fair Ausonia ; and once more she spake
A higher summons —still didst thou betake
Thee to thy native hopes. O thou hast won
A full accomplishment ! The thing is done,
Which undone, these our latter days had risen
On barren souls. Great Muse, thou know'st what
prison,
Of flesh and bone, curbs, and confines, and frets
Our spirits' wings : despondency besets
Our pillows ; and the fresh to-morrow morn
Seems to give forth its light in very scorn
Of our dull, uninspired, snail-paced lives.
Long have I said, how happy he who shrives
To thee ! But then I thought on poets gone,
And could not pray :—nor could I now—so on
I move to the end in lowliness of heart.—

' Ah, woe is me ! that I should fondly part
From my dear native land ! Ah, foolish maid !
Glad was the hour, when, with thee, myriads bade
Adieu to Ganges and their pleasant fields '
To one so friendless the clear freshet yields
A bitter coolness ; the ripe grape is sour .
Yet I would have, great gods ! but one short hour
Of native air—let me but die at home.'

Endymion to heaven's airy dome
Was offering up a hecatomb of vows,
When these words reach'd him. Whereupon he bows
His head through throny-green entanglement
Of underwood, and to the sound is bent,
Anxious as hind towards her hidden fawn.

' Is no one near to help me ? No fair dawn
Of life from charitable voice ? No sweet saying
To set my dull and sadden'd spirit playing ?
No hand to toy with mine ? No lips so sweet
That I may worship them ? No eyelids meet
To twinkle on my bosom ? No one dies
Before me, till from these enslaving eyes
Redemption sparkles !—I am sad and lost.'

Thou, Carian lord, hadst better have been tost
Into a whirlpool. Vanish into air,
Warm mountaineer ! for canst thou only bear
A woman's sigh alone and in distress ?
See not her charms ! Is Phœbe passionless ?
Phœbe is fairer far—O gaze no more :—
Yet if thou wilt behold all beauty's store,
Behold her panting in the forest grass !
Do not those curls of glossy jet surpass
For tenderness the arms so idly lain
Amongst them ? Feelest not a kindred pain,

To see such lovely eyes in swimming search
 After some warm delight, that seems to perch
 Dove-like in the dim cell lying beyond
 Their upper lids?—Hist!

‘O for Hermes’ wand,
 To touch this flower into human shape!
 That woodland Hyacinthus could escape
 From his green prison, and here kneeling down
 Call me his queen, his second life’s fair crown!
 Ah me, how I could love!—My soul doth melt
 For the unhappy youth—Love! I have felt
 So faint a kindness, such a meek surrender
 To what my own full thoughts had made too tender,
 That but for tears my life had fled away!—
 Ye deaf and senseless minutes of the day,
 And thou, old forest, hold ye this for true,
 There is no lightning, no authentic dew
 But in the eye of love: there’s not a sound,
 Melodious howsoever, can confound
 The heavens and earth in one to such a death
 As doth the voice of love: there’s not a breath
 Will mingle kindly with the meadow air,
 Till it has panted round, and stolen a share
 Of passion from the heart!’—

Upon a bough
 He leant, wretched. He surely cannot now
 Thirst for another love: O impious,
 That he can ever dream upon it thus!—
 Thought he, ‘Why am I not as are the dead,
 Since to a woe like this I have been led
 Through the dark earth, and through the wondrous sea?
 Goddess! I love thee not the less: from thee
 By Juno’s smile I turn not—no, no, no—
 While the great waters are at ebb and flow.—
 I have a triple soul! O fond pretence—
 For both, for both my love is so immense,
 I feel my heart is cut in twain for them.’

And so he groan'd, as one by beauty slain.
The lady's heart beat quick, and he could see
Her gentle bosom heave tumultuously.
He sprang from his green covert : there she lay
Sweet as a musk-rose upon new-made hay ,
With all her limbs on tremble, and her eyes
Shut softly up alive. To speak he tries.
' Fair damsel, pity me ! forgive that I
Thus violate thy bower's sanctity !
O pardon me, for I am full of grief—
Grief born of thee, young angel ! fairest thief !
Who stolen hast away the wings wherewith
I was to top the heavens. Dear maid, sith
Thou art my executioner, and I feel
Loving and hatred, misery and weal,
Will in a few short hours be nothing to me,
And all my story that much passion slew me ;
Do smile upon the evening of my days .
And, for my tortur'd brain begins to craze,
Be thou my nurse ; and let me understand
How dying I shall kiss that lily hand.—
Dost weep for me ? Then should I be content.
Scowl on, ye fates ! until the firmament
Outblackens Erebus, and the full-cavern'd earth
Crumbles into itself. By the cloud girth
Of Jove, those tears have given me a thirst
To meet oblivion.'—As her heart would burst
The maiden sobb'd awhile, and then replied :
' Why must such desolation betide
As that thou speakest of ? Are not these green
 nooks
Empty of all misfortune ? Do the brooks
Utter a gorgon voice ? Does yonder thrush,
Schooling its half-fledg'd little ones to brush
About the dewy forest, whisper tales ?—
Speak not of grief, young stranger, or cold snails
Will slime the rose to-night. Though if thou wilt,
Methinks 'twould be a guilt—a very guilt—

Not to companion thee, and sigh away
The light—the dusk—the dark—till break of day!’
‘Dear, lady,’ said Endymion, ‘’tis past :
I love thee ! and my days can never last.
That I may pass in patience still speak :
Let me have music dying, and I seek
No more delight—I bid adieu to all.
Didst thou not after other climates call,
And murmur about Indian streams ?’—Then she,
Sitting beneath the midmost forest tree,
For pity sang this roundelay :—

‘O Sorrow,
Why dost borrow
The natural hue of health, from vermeil lips ?
To give maiden blushes—
To the white rose bushes ?
Or is it thy dewy hand the daisy tips ?

‘O Sorrow,
Why dost borrow
The lustrous passion from a falcon-eye ?—
To give the glow-worm light ?
Or, on a moonless night,
To tinge, on syren shores, the salt sea-spry ?

‘O Sorrow,
Why dost borrow
The mellow ditties from a mourning tongue ?—
To give at evening pale
Until the nightingale,
That thou mayst listen the cold dews among ?

‘O Sorrow,
Why dost borrow
Heart’s lightness from the merriment of May ?
A lover would not tread
A cowslip on the head,
Though he should dance from eve till peep of day—

Nor any drooping flower
 Held sacred for thy bower,
 Wherever he may sport himself and play

‘To Sorrow,
 I bade good-morrow,
 And thought to leave her far away behind ;
 But cheerly, cheerly,
 She loves me dearly ;
 She is so constant to me, and so kind :
 I would deceive her
 And so leave her,
 But ah ! she is so constant and so kind.

‘Beneath my palm-trees, by the riverside,
 I sat a-weeping : in the whole world wide
 There was no one to ask me why I wept,—
 And so I kept
 Brimming the water-lily cups with tears
 Cold as my fears.

‘Beneath my palm-trees, by the riverside,
 I sat a-weeping . what enamour’d bride,
 Cheated by shadowy wooer from the clouds,
 But hides and shrouds
 Beneath dark palm-trees by a riverside ?

‘And as I sat, over the light blue hills
 There came a noise of revellers : the rills
 Into the wide stream came of purple hue—
 ‘Twas Bacchus and his crew !
 The earnest trumpet spake, and silver thrills
 From kissing cymbals made a merry din—
 ‘Twas Bacchus and his kin !
 Like to a moving vintage down they came,
 Crown’d with green leaves, and faces all on flame ;
 All madly dancing through the pleasant valley,
 To scare thee, Melancholy !

O then, O then, thou wast a simple name !
And I forgot thee, as the berried holly
By shepherds is forgotten, when, in June,
Tall chesnuts keep away the sun and moon :—
I rush'd into the folly !

' Within his car, aloft, young Bacchus stood,
Trifling his ivy-dart, in dancing mood,
With sidelong laughing ;
And little rills of crimson wine imbrued
His plump white arms, and shoulders, enough white
For Venus' pearly bite :
And near him rode Silenus on his ass,
Pelted with flowers as he on did pass
Tipsily quaffing.

' Whence came ye, merry Damsels ! whence came ye,
So many, and so many, and such glee ?
Why have ye left your bowers desolate,
Your lutes, and gentler fate ?—
" We follow Bacchus ! Bacchus on the wing,
A-conquering !
Bacchus, young Bacchus ! good or ill betide,
We dance before him thorough kingdoms wide :—
Come hither, lady fair, and joined be
To our wild minstrelsy ! "

' Whence came ye, jolly Satyrs ! whence came ye !
So many, and so many, and such glee ?
Why have ye left your forest haunts, why left
Your nuts in oak-tree cleft ?—
" For wine, for wine we left our kernel tree ;
For wine we left our heath, and yellow brooms,
And cold mushrooms ;
For wine we follow Bacchus through the earth ;
Great God of breathless cups and chirping mirth !—
Come hither, lady fair, and joined be
To our mad minstrelsy ! "

'Over wide streams and mountains great we went,
And, save when Bacchus kept his ivy tent,
Onward the tiger and the leopard pants,

With Asian elephants :

Onward these myriads—with song and dance,
With zebras stripped, and sleek Arabians' piance,
Web-footed alligators, crocodiles,
Bearing upon their scaly backs, in files,
Plump infant laughers mimicking the coil
Of seamen, and stout galley-rowers' toil
With toying oars and silken-sails they glide,
Nor care for wind and tide.

'Mounted on pathers' furs and lions' manes,
From rear to van they scour about the plains;
A three days' journey in a moment done :
And always, at the rising of the sun,
About the wilds they hunt with spear and horn,
On spleenful unicorn.

'I saw Osirian Egypt kneel adown
Before the vine-wreath crown !
I saw parch'd Abyssinia rouse and sing
To the silver cymbals' ring !
I saw the whelming vintage hotly pierce
Old Tartary the fierce !
The kings of Ind their jewel-sceptres vail,
And from their treasures scatter pearly hail ;
Great Brahma from his mystic heaven groans,
And all his priesthood moans ;
Before young Bacchus' eye-wink turning pale.—
Into these regions came I following him,
Sick hearted, weary—so I took a whim
To stray away into these forests drear
Alone, without a peer :
And I have told thee all thou mayest hear

'Young stranger!
I've been a ranger
In search of pleasure throughout every clime:
Alas, 'tis not for me!
Bewitch'd I sure must be,
To lose in grieving all my maiden prime.

'Come then, Sorrow!
Sweetest Sorrow!
Like an own babe I nurse thee on my breast:
I thought to leave thee
And deceive thee,
But now of all the world I love thee best.

'There is not one,
No, no, not one
But thee to comfort a poor lonely maid;
Thou art her mother,
And her brother,
Her playmate, and her wooer in the shade.'

O what a sigh she gave in finishing,
And look, quite dead to every worldly thing!
Endymion could not speak, but gazed on her;
And listened to the wind that now did stir
About the crisped oaks full drearily,
Yet with as sweet a softness as might be
Remember'd from its velvet summer song.
At last he said: 'Poor lady, how thus long
Have I been able to endure that voice?
Fair Melody! kind Syren! I've no choice;
I must be thy sad servant evermore:
I cannot choose but kneel here and adore.
Alas, I must not think—by Phœbe, no!
Let me not think, soft Angel! shall it be so?
Say, beautifullest, shall I never think?
O thou couldst foster me beyond the brink
Of recollection! make my watchful care
Close up its bloodshot eyes, nor see despair!

Do gently murder half my soul, and I
Shall feel the other half so utterly !—
I'm giddy at that cheek so fair and smooth ;
O let it blush so ever : let it soothe
My madness ! let it mantle ros̄y-warm
With the tinge of love, panting in safe alarm.
This cannot be thy hand, and yet it is ,
And this is sure thine other softling—this
Thine own fair bosom, and I am so near !
Wilt fall asleep ? O let me sip that tear !
And whisper one sweet word that I may know
This is this world—sweet dewy blossom '—WOE !
WOE ! WOE TO THAT ENDYMION ! WHERE IS HE ?—
Even these words went echoing dismally
Through the wide forest—a most fearful tone,
Like one repenting in his latest moan ;
And while it died away a shade pass'd by,
As of a thunder cloud. When arrows fly
Through the thick branches, poor ring-doves sleek forth
Their tumid necks and trembling ; so these both
Leant to each other trembling, and sat so
Waiting for some destruction—when lo,
Foot-feather'd Mercury appear'd sublime
Beyond the tall tree-tops ; and in less time
Than shoots the slanted hailstorm, down he dropp'd
Towards the ground ; but rested not, nor stopp'd
One moment from his home : only the sword
He with his wand light touch'd, and heavenward
Swifter than sight was gone—even before
The teeming earth a sudden witness bore
Of his swift magic. Diving swans appear
Above the crystal circling's white and clear ;
And catch the cheated eye in wide surprise,
How they can dive in sight and unseen rise—
So from the turf outsprang two steeds jet-black,
Each with large dark blue wings upon his back.
The youth of Caria plac'd the lovely dame
On one, and felt himself in spleen to tame

The other's fierceness Through the air they flew,
High as the eagles. Like two drops of dew
Exhal'd to Phœbus' lips, away they are gone,
Far from the earth away—unseen, alone,
Among cool clouds and winds, but that the free,
The buoyant life of song can floating be
Above their heads, and follow them untired.—
Muse of my native land ! am I inspir'd ?
This is the giddy air, and I must spread
Wide pinions to keep here ; nor do I dread,
Or height, or depth, or width, or any chance
Precipitous : I have beneath my glance
Those towering horses and their mournful freight.
Could I thus sail, and see, and thus await
Fearless for power of thought, without thine aid ?—

There is a sleepy dusk, an odorous shade
From some approaching wonder, and behold
Those winged steeds, with snorting nostrils bold
Snuff at its faint extreme, and seem to tire,
Dying to embers from their native fire !

There curl'd a purple mist around them ; soon,
It seem'd as when around the pale new moon
Sad Zephyr droops the clouds like weeping willow :
'Twas Sleep slow journeying with head on pillow.
For the first time, since he came nigh dead-born
From the old womb of night, his cave forlorn
Had he left more forlorn ; for the first time,
He felt aloof the day and morning's prime—
Because into his depth Cimmerian
There came a dream, showing how a young man,
Ere a lean bat could plump its wintry skin,
Would at high Jove's empyreal footstool win
An immortality, and how espouse
Jove's daughter, and be reckon'd of his house.
Now was he slumbering towards heaven's gate,
That he might at the threshold one hour wait

To hear the marriage melodies, and then
Sink downward to his dusky cave again :
His litter of smooth semiluculent mist,
Diversely tinged with rose and amethyst,
Puzzled those eyes that for the centre sought ;
And scarcely for one moment could be caught
His sluggish form reposing motionless.
Those two on winged steeds, with all the stress
Of vision search'd for him, as one would look
Athwart the shallows of a river nook
To catch a glance at silver-throated eels,—
Or from old Skiddaw's top, when fog conceals
His rugged forehead in a mantle pale,
With an eye-guess towards some pleasant vale
Descry a favourite hamlet faint and far.

These raven horses, though they foster'd are
Of earth's splenetic fire, dully drop
Their full-vein'd ears, nostrils blood wide, and
stop ;

Upon the spiritless mist have they outspread
Their ample feathers, are in slumber dead,—
And on those pinions, level in mid-air,
Endymion sleepeth and the lady fair.
Slowly they sail, slowly as icy isle
Upon a calm sea drifting and meanwhile
The mournful wanderer dreams. Behold ! he walks
On heaven's pavement ; brotherly he talks
To divine powers : from his hand full tain
Juno's proud birds are pecking pearly grain :
He tries the nerve of Phœbus' golden bow,
And asketh where the golden apples grow :
Upon his arm he braces Pallas' shield,
And strives in vain to unsettle and wield
A Jovian thunderbolt : arch Hebe brings,
A full-brimm'd goblet, dances lightly, sings
And tantalises long ; at last he drinks,
And lost in pleasure at her feet he sinks,

Touching with dazzled lips her starlight hand.
He blows a bugle,—an ethereal band
Are visible above : the Seasons four,—
Green-kyrtled Spring, flush Summer, golden store
In Autumn's sickle, Winter frosty-hoar,
Join dance with shadowy Hours ; while still the
blast,

In swells unmitigated, still doth last
To sway their floating morris. ' Whose is this ?
Whose bugle ? ' he inquires ; they smile—' O Dis !
Why is this mortal here ? Dost thou not know
Its mistress' lips ? Not thou ?—'Tis Dian's : lo !
She rises crescented ! ' Hē looks, 'tis she,
His very goddess : good-bye earth, and sea,
And air, and pains, and care, and suffering ;
Good-bye to all but love ! Then doth he spring
Towards her, and awakes—and, strange, o'erhead,
Of those same fragrant exhalations bred,
Beheld awake his very dream : the gods
Stood smiling, merry Hebe laughs and nods ;
And Phœbe bends towards him crescented.
O state perplexing ! On the pinion bed,
Too well awake, he feels the panting side
Of his delicious lady. He who died
For soaring too audacious in the sun,
Where that same treacherous wax began to run,
Felt not more tongue-tied than Endymion.
His heart leapt up as to its rightful throne,
To that fair shadow'd passion pulsed its way—
Ah, what perplexity ! Ah, well-a-day !
So fond, so beauteous was his bed-fellow,
He could not help but kiss her : then he grew
Awhile forgetful of all beauty save
Young Phœbe's, golden-hair'd ; and so 'gan crave
Forgiveness : yet he turn'd once more to look
At the sweet sleeper,—all his soul was shook,—
She press'd his hand in slumber ; so once more
He could not help but kiss her and adore.

At this the shadow wept, melting away.
 The Latmian started up: 'Bright goddess, stay!
 Search my most hidden breast! By truth's own tongue,
 I have no dædale heart: why is it wrung
 To desperation? Is there nought for me,
 Upon the bourne of bliss, but misery?'

These words awoke the stranger of dark tresses:
 Her dawning love-look rapt Endymion blesses
 With 'haviour soft. Sleep yawn'd from underneath.
 'Thou swan of Ganges, let us no more breathe
 This murky phantasm! thou contented seem'st
 Pillow'd in lovely idleness, nor dream'st
 What horrors may discomfort thee and me.
 Ah, shouldst thou die from my heart-treachery!—
 Yet did she merely weep—her gentle soul
 Hath no revenge in it: as it is whole
 In tenderness, would I were whole in love!
 Can I prize thee, fair maid, all price above,
 Even when I feel as true as innocence?
 I do, I do.—What is this soul then? Whence
 Came it? It does not seem my own, and I
 Have no self-passion or identity.
 Some fearful end must be: where, where is it?
 By Nemesis, I see my spirit flit
 Alone about the dark—Forgive me, sweet.
 Shall we away?' He rous'd the steeds: they beat
 Their wings chivalrous into the clear air,
 Leaving old Sleep within his vapoury lair.

The good-night blush of eve was waning slow,
 And Vesper, risen star, began to throe
 In the dusk heavens silvery, when they
 Thus sprang direct towards the Galaxy.
 Nor did speed hinder converse soft and strange—
 Eternal oaths and vows they interchange,
 In such wise, in such temper, so aloof
 Up in the winds, beneath a starry roof,

So witless of their doom, that verily
'Tis well-nigh past man's search their hearts to see ;
Whether they wept, or laugh'd, or griev'd, or toy'd—
Most like with joy gone mad, with sorrow cloy'd.

Full facing their swift flight, from ebon streak,
The moon put forth a little diamond peak,
No bigger than an unobserved star,
Or tiny point of fairy scimitar ;
Bright signal that she only stoop'd to tie
Her silver sandals, ere deliciously
She bow'd into the heavens her timid head.
Slowly she rose, as though she would have fled,
While to his lady meek the Carian turn'd,
To mark if her dark eyes had yet discern'd
This beauty in its birth—Despair ! despair !
He saw her body fading gaunt and spare
In the cold moonshine. Straight he seiz'd her wrist ;
It melted from his grasp : her hand he kiss'd,
And, horror ! kiss'd his own—he was alone.
Her steed a little higher soar'd, and then
Dropt hawkwise to the earth.

There lies a den,
Beyond the seeming confines of the space
Made for the soul to wander in and trace
Its own existence, of remotest glooms.
Dark regions are around it, where the tombs
Of buried griefs the spirit sees, but scarce
One hour doth linger weeping, for the pierce
Of new-born woe it feels more inly smart :
And in these regions many a venom'd dart
At random flies ; they are the proper home
Of every ill : the man is yet to come
Who hath not journeyed in this native hell.
But few have ever felt how calm and well
Sleep may be had in that deep den of all.
There anguish does not sting ; nor pleasure pall !

Woe-hurricanes beat ever at the gate,
Yet all is still within and desolate
Beset with plainful gusts, within ye hear
No sound so loud as when on curtain'd bier
The death-watch tick is stifled. Enter none
Who strive therefore : on the sudden it is won.
Just when the sufferer begins to burn,
Then it is free to him ; and from an urn,
Still fed by melting ice, he takes a draught—
Young Semele such richness never quaff'd
In her maternal longing ! Happy gloom !
Dark Paradise ! where pale becomes the bloom
Of health by due ; where silence dreariest
Is most articulate ; where hopes infest ;
Where those eyes are the brightest far that keep
Their lids shut longest in a dreamless sleep.
O happy spirit-home ! O wondrous soul !
Pregnant with such a den to save the whole
In thine own depth. Hail, gentle Carian !
For, never since thy griefs and woes began,
Hast thou felt so content . a grievous feud
Hath let thee to this Cave of Quietude.
Ay, his lull'd soul was there, although upborne
With dangerous speed . and so he did not mourn
Because he knew not whither he was going.
So happy was he, not the aerial blowing
Of trumpets at clear parley from the east
- Could rouse from that fine relish, that high
feast.
They stung the feather'd horse : with fierce
alarm
He flapp'd towards the sound. Alas, no charm
Could lift Endymion's head, or he had view'd
A skyeey mask, a pinion'd multitude,—
And silvery was its passing ; voices sweet
Warbling the while as if to lull and greet
The wanderer in his path. Thus warbled they,
While past the vision went in bright array.

' Who, who from Dian's feast would be away?
For all the golden bowers of the day
Are empty left? Who, who away would be
From Cynthia's wedding and festivity?
Not Hesperus: lo! upon his silver wings
He leans away for highest heaven and sings,
Snapping his lucid fingers merrily!—
Ah, Zephyrus! 'art here, and Flora too!
Ye tender bibbers of the rain and dew,
Young playmates of the rose and daffodil,
Be careful, ere ye enter in, to fill

Your baskets high
With fennel green, and balm, and golden pines,
Savory, latter-mint, and columbines,
Cool parsley, basil sweet, and sunny thyme;
Yea, every flower and leaf of every clime,
All gather'd in the dewy morning: hie

Away! fly, fly!—
Crystalline brother of the belt of heaven,
Aquarius! to whom king Jove has given
Two liquid pulse streams 'stead of feather'd wings,
Two fan-like fountains,—thine illuminings

For Dian play:
Dissolve the frozen purity of air;
Let thy white shoulders silvery and bare
Show cold through watery pinions; make more bright
The Star-Queen's crescent on her marriage night:

Haste, haste away!—
Castor has tamed the planet Lion, see!
And of the Bear has Pollux-mastery:
A third is in the race! who is the third
Speeding away swift as the eagle bird?

The ramping Centaur!
The Lion's mane's on end: the Bear how fierce!
The Centaur's arrow ready seems to pierce
Some enemy: far forth his bow is bent
Into the blue of heaven. He'll be shent,
Pale unrelentor,

When he shall hear the wedding lutes a-playing —
 Andromeda ! sweet woman ! why delaying
 So timidly among the stars : come hither !
 Join this bright throng, and nimbly follow whither
 They all are going.

Danae's Son, before Jove newly bow'd,
 Has wept for thee, calling to Jove aloud.
 Thee, gentle lady, did he disenthral :
 Ye shall for ever live and love, for all
 Thy tears are flowing.—
 By Daphne's fright, behold Apollo !—

More

Endymion heard not : down his steed him bore,
 Prone to the green head of a misty hill.

His first touch of the earth went nigh to kill
 'Alas !' said he, 'were I but always borne
 Through dangerous winds, had but my footsteps
 worn

A path in hell, for ever would I bless
 Horrors which nourish an uneasiness
 For my own sullen conquering : to him
 Who lives beyond earth's boundary, grief is dim,
 Sorrow is but a shadow : now I see
 The grass ; I feel the solid ground—Ah, me !
 It is thy voice—divinest ! Where ?—who ? who
 Left thee so quiet on this bed of dew ?
 Behold upon this happy earth we are ;
 Let us aye love each other ; let us fare
 On forest-fruits, and never, never go
 Among the abodes of mortals here below,
 Or be by phantoms duped O destiny !
 Into a labyrinth now my soul would fly,
 But with thy beauty will I deaden it.
 Where didst thou melt to ? By thee will I sit
 For ever : let our fate stop here—a kid
 I on this spot will offer : Pan will bid

Us live in peace, in love and peace among
His forest wildernesses. I have clung
To nothing, loved a nothing, nothing-seen
Or felt but a great dream ! O I have been
Presumptuous against love, against the sky,
Against all elements, against the tie
Of mortals each to each, against the blooms
Of flowers, rush of rivers, and the tombs
Of heroes gone ! Against his proper glory
Has my own soul conspired : so my story
Will I to children utter, and repent.
There never lived a mortal man, who bent
His appetite beyond his natural sphere,
But starv'd and died. My sweetest Indian, here;
Here will I kneel, for thou redeemed hast
My life from too thin breathing : gone and past
Are cloudy phantasms. Caverns lone, farewell !
And air of visions, and the monstrous swell
Of visionary seas ! No, never more
Shall airy voices cheat me to the shore
Of tangled wonder, breathless and aghast.
Adieu, my daintiest Dream ! although so vast
My love is still for thee. The hour may come
When we shall meet in pure Elysium.
On earth I may not love-thee ; and therefore
Doves will I offer up, and sweetest store
All through the teeming year : so thou wilt shine
On me, and on this damsel fair of mine,
And bless our silver lives. My Indian bliss !
My river-lily bud ! one human kiss !
One sign of real breath—one gentle squeeze,
Warm as a dove's nest among summer trees,
And warm with dew at ooze from living blood !
Whither didst melt ? Ah, what of that !—all good
We'll talk about—no more of dreaming—Now,
Where shall our dwelling be ? Under the brow
Of some steep mossy hill, where ivy dun
Would hide us up, although spring leaves were no

And where dark yew-trees, as we rustle through,
Will drop their scarlet-berry cups of dew !
O thou wouldst joy to live in such a place !
Dusk for our loves, yet light enough to grace
Those gentle limbs on mossy bed reclin'd
For by one step the blue sky shouldst thou find,
And by another, in deep dell below,
See, through the trees, a little river go
All in its midday gold and glimmering.
Honey from out the gnarled hive I'll bring,
And apples, wan with sweetness, gather thee,—
Cresses that grow where no man may them see,
And sorrel untorn by the dew-claw'd stag :
Pipes will I fashion of the syrinx flag,
That thou mayst always know whither I roam,
When it shall please thee in our quiet home
To listen and think of love Still let me speak ;
Still let me dive into the joy I seek,—
For yet the past doth prison me. The rill,
Thou haply mayst delight in, will I fill
With fairy fishes from the mountain tarn,
And thou shalt feed them from the squirrel's barn.
Its bottom will I strew with amber shells,
And pebbles blue from deep enchanted wells
Its sides I'll plant with dew-sweet eglantine,
And honeysuckles full of clear bee-wine
I will entice this crystal rill to trace
Love's silver name upon the meadow's face.
I'll kneel to Vesta, for a flame of fire ,
And to god Phoebus, for a golden lyre ;
To Empress Dian, for a hunting-spear ;
To Vesper, for a taper silver-clear,
That I may see thy beauty through the night ;
To Flora, and a nightingale shall light
Tame on thy finger ; to the River-gods,
And they shall bring thee taper fishing-rods
Of gold, and lines of Naiads' long bright tress.
Heaven shield thee for thine utter loveliness !

Thy mossy footstool shall the altar be
'Fore which I'll bend, bending, dear love, to thee :
Those lips shall be my Delphos, and shall speak
Laws to my footsteps, colour to my cheek,
Trembling or steadfastness to this same voice,
And of three sweetest pleasurings the choice :
And that affectionate light, those diamond things,
Those eyes, those passions, those supreme pea-
springs,
Shall be my grief, or twinkle me to pleasure.
Say, is not bliss within our perfect seizure?
O that I could not doubt !

The mountaineer

Thus strove by fancies vain and crude to clear-
His brier'd path to some tranquillity.
It gave bright gladness to his lady's eye,
And yet the tears she wept were tears of sorrow ;
Answering thus, just as the golden morrow
Beam'd upward from the valleys of the east :
' O that the flutter of this heart had ceas'd,
Or the sweet name of love had pass'd away.
Young feather'd tyrant ! by a swift decay-
Wilt thou devote this body to the earth :
And I do think that at my very birth
I lisp'd thy blooming titles inwardly ;
For at the first, first dawn and thought of thee,
With uplift hands I blest the stars of heaven.
Art thou not cruel ? Ever have I striven
To think thee kind, but ah, it will not do !
When yet a child, I heard that kisses drew
Favour from thee, and so I kisses gave
To the void air, bidding them find out love :
But when I came to feel how far above
All fancy, pride, and fickle maidenhood,
All earthly pleasure, all imagined good,
Was the warm tremble of a devout kiss,—
Even then, that moment, at the thought of this,

Fainting I fell into a bed of flowers,
 And languish'd there three days. Ye milder powers,
 Am I not cruelly wrong'd? Believe, believe
 Me, dear Endymion, were I to weave
 With my own fancies garlands of sweet life,
 Thou shouldst be one of all. Ah, bitter strife!
 I may not be thy love: I am forbidden—
 Indeed I am—thwarted, affrighted, chidden,
 By things I trembled at, and gorgon wrath.
 Twice hast thou ask'd whither I went: henceforth
 Ask me no more! I may not utter it,
 Nor may I be thy love. We might commit
 Ourselves at once to vengeance; we might die;
 We might embrace and die: voluptuous thought!
 Enlarge not to my hunger, or I'm caught
 In trammels of perverse deliciousness.
 No, no, that shall not be: thee will I bless,
 And bid a long adieu'

The Carian

O word return'd. both love-lorn, silent, wan,
 Into the valleys green together went.
 Far wandering, they were perforce content
 To sit beneath a fair lone beechen tree;
 Nor at each other gaz'd, but heavily
 Pot'd on its hazel cirque of shedded leaves

Endymion! unhappy! it nigh grieves
 Me to behold thee thus in last extreme:
 Ensky'd ere this, but truly that I deem
 Truth the best music in a first-born song.
 Thy lute-voiced brother will I sing ere long,
 And thou shalt aid—hast thou not aided me?
 Yes, moonlight Emperor! felicity
 Has been thy meed for many thousand years;
 Yet often have I, on the brink of tears,
 Mourn'd as if yet thou wert a forester;—
 Forgetting the old tale

He did not stir

His eyes from the dead leaves, or one small pulse
Of joy he might have felt. The spirit culls
Unfaded amaranth, when wild it strays
Through the old garden-ground of boyish days.
A little onward ran the very stream
By which he took his first soft poppy dream ;
And on the very bark 'gainst which he leant
A crescent he had carv'd, and round it spent
His skill in little stars. The teeming tree
Had swollen and green'd the pious character,
But not ta'en out Why, there was not a slope
Up which he had not fear'd the antelope ;
And not a tree, beneath whose rooty shade
He had not with his tamed leopards play'd :
Nor could an arrow light, or javelin,
Fly in the air where his had never been—
And yet he knew it not.

O treachery !

Why does his lady smile, pleasing her eye—
With all his sorrowing ? He sees her not.
But who so stares on him ? His sister—sure !
Peona of the woods !—Can she endure—
Impossible—how dearly they embrace !
His lady smiles ; delight is in her face ;
It is no treachery.

' Dear brother mine !

Endymion, weep not so ! Why shouldst thou pine
When all great Latmos so exalt will be ?
Thank the great gods, and look not bitterly ;—
And speak not one pale word, and sigh no more.
Sure I will not believe thou hast such store
Of grief, to last thee to my kiss again.
Thou surely canst not bear a mind in pain,
Come hand in hand with one so beautiful.
Be happy both of you ! for I will pull

The flowers of 'autumn for your coronals
Pân's holy priest for young Endymion calls ;
And when he is restor'd, thou, fairest dame,
Shalt be our queen. Now, is it not a shame
To see ye thus,—not very, very sad ?
Perhaps ye are too happy to be glad :
O feel as if it were a common day ;
Free-voiced as one who never was away.
No tongue shall ask, whence come ye? but ye shall
Be gods of your own rest imperial.
Not even I, for one whole month, will pry
Into the hours that have pass'd us by,
Since in my arbour I did sing to thee.
O Hermes ! on this very night will be
A hymning up to Cynthia, queen of light ;
For the soothsayers old saw yesternight
Good visions in the air,—whence will befall,
As say these sages, health perpetual
To shepherds and their flocks ; and furthermore,
In Dian's face they read the gentle lore :
Therefore for her these vesper-carols are.
Our friends will all be there from nigh and far.
Many upon thy death have ditties made,
And many, even now, their foreheads shade
With cypress, on a day of sacrifice.
New singing for our maids shalt thou devise,
And pluck the sorrow from our huntsmen's brows
Tell me, my lady-queen, how to espouse
This wayward brother to his rightful joys !
His eyes are on thee bent, as thou didst poise
His fate most goddess-like Help me, I pray,
To lure—Endymion, dear brother, say
What ails thee ?' He could bear no more, and so
Bent his soul fiercely like a spiritual bow,
And twang'd it inwardly, and calmly said .
' I would have thee my only friend, sweet maid !
My only visitor ! not ignorant though,
That those deceptions which for pleasure go

'Mong men, are pleasures real as real may be :
But there are higher ones I may not see,
If impiously an earthly realm I take.
Since I saw thee, I have been wide awake
Night after night, and day by day, until
Of the empyrean I have drunk my fill.
Let it content thee, Sister, seeing me
More happy than betides mortality.
A hermit young, I'll live in mossy cave,
Where thou alone shalt come to me, and lave
Thy spirit in the wonders I shall tell.
Through me the shepherd realm shall prosper
well ;

For to thy tongue will I all health confide.
And, for my sake, let this young maid abide
With thee as a dear sister. Thou alone,
Peona, mayst return to me. I own
This may sound strangely : but when, dearest girl,
Thou seest it for my happiness, no pearl
Will trespass down those cheeks. Companion fair !
Wilt be content to dwell with her, to share
This sister's love with me ?' Like one resign'd
And bent by circumstance, and thereby blind
In self-commitment, thus that meek Unknown :
'Ay, but a buzzing by my ears has flown,
Of jubilee to Dian :—truth I heard !
Well then, I see there is no little bird,
Tender soever, but is Jove's own care.
Long have I sought for rest, and, unaware,
Behold I find it ! so exalted too !
So after my own heart ! I knew, I knew
There was a place untenanted in it.
In that same void white-Chastity shall sit,
And monitor me nightly to lone slumber.
With sanest lips I vow me to the number
Of Dian's sisterhood ; and, kind lady,
With thy good help, this very night shall see
My future days to her fane consecrate.'

As feels a dreamer what doth most create
His own particular fright, so these three felt :
Or like one who, in after-ages, knelt
To Lucifer or Baal, when he'd pine
After a little sleep : or when in mine
Far underground, a sleeper meets his friends
Who know him not. Each diligently bends
Towards common thoughts and things for very fear ;
Striving their ghastly malady to cheer,
By thinking it a thing of yes and no,
That housewives talk of. But the spirit-blow
Was struck, and all were dreamers At the last
Endymion said : ' Are not our fates all cast ?
Why stand we here ? Adieu, ye tender pair !
Adieu ! ' Whereat those maidens, with wild stare,
Walk'd dizzily away. Pained and hot
His eyes went after them, until they got
Near to a cypress grove, whose deadly maw,
In one swift moment, would what then he saw
Engulf for ever. ' Stay ! ' he cried, ' ah, stay !
Turn, damsels ! hist ! one word I have to say.
Sweet Indian, I would see thee once again.
It is a thing I dote on : so I'd fain,
Peona, ye should hand in hand repair
Into those holy groves, that silent are
Behind great Dian's temple I'll be yon,
At vesper's earliest twinkle—they are gone—
But once, once, once again——' At this he prest
His hands against his face, and then did rest
His head upon a mossy hillock green,
And so remain'd as he a corpse had been
All the long day ; save when he scantily lifted
His eyes abroad, to see how shadows shifted
With the slow move of time,—sluggish and weary
Until the poplar tops, in journey dreary,
Had reach'd the river's brim Then up he rose,
And, slowly as that very river flows,
Walk'd towards the temple grove with this lament
' Why such a golden eve ? The breeze is sent



CRIDYWIQ. Laid adown
Before his goddess, in a blissful swoon.

Careful and soft, that not a leaf may fall
Before the serene father of them all
Bows down his summer head below the west.
Now am I of breath, speech, and speed possest,
But at the setting I must bid adieu
To her for the last time Night will strew
On the damp grass myriads of lingering leaves,
And with them shall I die; nor much it grieves
To die, when summer dies on the cold sward.
Why, I have been a butterfly, a lord
Of flowers, garlands, love-knots, silly posies,
Groves, meadows, melodies, and arbour roses;
My kingdom's at its death, and just it is
That I should die with it: so in all this
We miscall grief, bale, sorrow, heartbreak, woe,
What is there to plain of? By Titan's foe
I am but rightly serv'd.' So saying, he
Tripp'd lightly on, in sort of deathful glee;
Laughing at the clear stream and setting sun,
As though they jests had been: nor had he done
His laugh at nature's holy countenance,
Until that grove appear'd, as if perchance,
And then his tongue with sober seemlied
Gave utterance as he enter'd: 'Ha!' I said,
'King of the butterflies; but by this gloom,
And by old Rhadamanthus' tongue of doom,
This dusk religion, pomp of solitude,
And the Promethean clay by thief endued,
By old Saturnus' forelock, by his head
Shook with eternal palsy, I did wed
Myself to things of light from infancy;
And thus to be cast out, thus lorn to die,
Is sure enough to make a mortal man
Grow impious.' So he inwardly began
On things for which no wording can be found;
Deeper and deeper sinking, until drown'd
Beyond the reach of music for the choir
Of Cynthia he heard not, though rough brier

Nor muffling thicket interpos'd to dull
The vesper hymn, far swollen, soft and full,
Through the dark pillars of those sylvan aisles.
He saw not the two maidens, nor their smiles,
Wan as primroses gather'd at midnight
By chilly finger'd spring. 'Unhappy wight!
'Endymion!' said Peona, 'we are here!
What wouldst thou ere we all are laid on bier?'
Then he embrac'd her, and his lady's hand
Press'd, saying: 'Sister, I would have command,
If it were heaven's will, on our sad fate.'
At which that dark-eyed stranger stood elate
And said, in a new voice, but sweet as love,
To Endymion's amaze: 'By Cupid's dove,
And so thou shalt! and by the lily truth
Of my own breast thou shalt, beloved youth!'
And as she spake, into her face there came
Light, as reflected from a silver flame:
Her long black hair swell'd ampler, in display
Full golden; in her eyes a brighter day
Dawn'd blue and full of love. Ay, he beheld
Phoebe, his passion! joyous she upheld
Her lucid bow, continuing thus: 'Drear, drear
Has our delaying been; but foolish fear
Withheld me first; and then decrees of fate;
And then 'twas fit that from this mortal state
Thou shouldst, my love, by some unlook'd-for change
Be spiritualis'd. Peona, we shall range
These forests, and to thee they safe shall be
As was thy cradle; hither shalt thou flee
To meet us many a time.' Next Cynthia bright,
Peona kiss'd, and bless'd with fair good-night:
Her brother kiss'd her too, and knelt adown
Before his goddess, in a blissful swoon
She gave her fair hands to him, and behold,
Before three swiftest kisses he had told,
They vanish'd far away!—Peona went
Home through the gloomy wood in wonderment.

LAMIA,
ISABELLA,
THE EVE OF ST. AGNES,
AND
OTHER POEMS
1820.

LAMIA

PART I

UPON a time, before the faery broods
Drove Nymph and Satyr from the prosperous woods,
Before king Oberon's bright diadem,
Sceptre, and mantle, clasp'd with dewy gem,
Frighted away the Dryads and the Fauns
From rushes green, and brakes, and cowslip'd lawns,
The ever-smitten Hermes empty left
His golden throne, bent warm on amorous theft :
From high Olympus had he stolen light,
On this side of Jove's clouds, to escape the sight
Of his great summoner, and made retreat
Into a forest on the shores of Crete.
For somewhere in that sacred island dwelt
A nymph, to whom all hoofed Satyrs knelt ;
At whose white feet the languid Tritons poured
Pearls, while on land they wither'd and adored.
Fast by the springs where she to bathe was wont,
And in those meads where sometime she might haunt,
Were strewn rich gifts, unknown to any Muse,
Though Fancy's casket were unlock'd to choose
Ah, what a world of love was at her feet !
So Hermes thought, and a celestial heat
Burnt from his winged heels to either ear,
That from a whiteness, as the lily clear,
Blush'd into roses 'mid his golden hair,
Fallen in jealous curls about his shoulders bare.
From vale to vale, from wood to wood, he flew,
Breathing upon the flowers his passion new,
And wound with many a river to its head,
To find where this sweet nymph prepar'd her secret bed :

In vain ; the sweet nymph might nowhere be found,
 And so he rested, on the lonely ground,
 Pensive, and full of painful jealousies
 Of the Wood-Gods, and even the very trees.
 There as he stood, he heard a mournful voice,
 Such as once heard, in gentle heart, destroys
 All pain but pity : thus the lone voice spake .
 ' When from this wreathed tomb shall I awake !
 ' When move in a sweet body fit for life,
 ' And love, and pleasure, and the ruddy strife
 ' Of hearts and lips ! Ah, miserable me !'
 The God, dove-footed, glided silently
 Round bush and tree, soft-brushing, in his speed,
 The taller grasses and full-flowering weed,
 Until he found a palpitating snake,
 Bright, and cirque-couchant in a dusky brake.

She was a gordian shape of dazzling hue,
 Vermilion-spotted, golden, green, and blue ;
 Striped like a zebra, freckled like a pard,
 Eyed like a peacock, and all crimson barr'd ;
 And full of silver moons, that, as she breathed,
 Dissolv'd, or brighter shone, or interwreathed
 Their lustres with the gloomier tapestries—
 So rainbow-sided, touch'd with miseries,
 She seem'd, at once, some penanced lady elf,
 Some demon's mistress, or the demon's self.
 Upon her crest she wore a wannish fire
 Sprinkled with stars, like Ariadne's tiar :
 Her head was serpent, but ah, bitter-sweet !
 She had a woman's mouth with all its pearls complete :
 And for her eyes—what could such eyes do there
 But weep, and weep, that they were born so fair ?
 As Proserpine still weeps for her Sicilian air.
 Her throat was serpent, but the words she spake
 Came, as through bubbling honey, for Love's sake,
 And thus ; while Hermes on his pinions lay,
 Like a stoop'd, falcon ere he takes his prey.

' Fair Hermes ! crown'd with feathers, fluttering light,
' I had a splendid dream of thee last night :
' I saw thee sitting, on a throne of gold,
' Among the Gods, upon Olympus old,
' The only sad one ; for thou didst not hear
' The soft, lute-finger'd Muses chanting clear,
' Nor even Apollo when he sang alone,
' Deaf to his throbbing throat's long, long melodious
moan.

' I dreamt I saw thee, robed in purple flakes,
' Break amorous through the clouds, as morning breaks,
' And, swiftly as a bright Phœbean dart,
' Strike for the Cretan-isle ; and here thou art !
' Too gentle Hermes, hast thou found the maid ?'
Whereat the star of Lethe not delay'd
His rosy éloquence, and thus inquired :
' Thou smooth-lipp'd sérpent, surely high inspired !
' Thou beauteous wreath, with melancholy eyes,
' Possess whatever bliss thou canst devise,
' Telling me only where my nymph is fled,—
' Where she doth breathe !' ' Bright planet, thou
hast said,'

Return'd the snake, ' but seal with oaths, fair God !'
' I swear,' said Hermes, ' by my serpent rod,
' And by thine eyes, and by thy starry crown !'
Light flew his earnest words, among the blossoms blown.
Then thus again the brilliance feminine :
' Too frail of heart ! for this lost nymph of thine,
' Free as the air, invisibly, she strays
' About these thornless wilds ; her pleasant days
' She tastes unseen ; unseen her nimble feet
' Leave traces in the grass and flowers sweet .
' From weary tendrils, and bow'd branches green,
' She plucks the fruit unseen, she bathes unseen .
' And by my power is her beauty veil'd
' To keep it unaffronted, unassail'd
' By the love-glances of unlovely eyes,
' Of Satyrs, Fauns, and blear'd Silenus' sighs.

'Pale grew her immortality, for woe
'Of all these lovers, and she grieved so
'I took compassion on her, bade her steep
'Her hair in wierd syrops, that would keep
'Her loveliness invisible, yet free
'To wander as she loves, in liberty.
'Thou shalt behold her, Hermes, thou alone,
'If thou wilt, as thou swearest, grant my boon !'
Then, once again, the charmed God began
An oath, and through the serpent's ears it ran
Warm, tremulous, devout, psalterian
Ravish'd she lifted her Circean head,
Blush'd a live damask, and swift-lipping said,
'I was a woman, let me have once more
'A woman's shape, and charming as before
'I love a youth of Corinth—O the bliss !
'Give me my woman's form, and place me where he is.
'Stoop, Hermes, let me breathe upon thy brow,
'And thou shalt see thy sweet nymph even now.
The God on half-shut feathers sank serene,
She breath'd upon his eyes, and swift was seen
Of both the guarded nymph near-smiling on the green.
It was no dream ; or say a dream it was,
Real are the dreams of Gods, and smoothly pass
Their pleasures in a long immortal dream.
One warm, flush'd moment, hovering, it might seem
Dash'd by the wood-nymph's beauty, so he burn'd ;
Then, lighting on the printless verdure, turn'd
To the swoon'd serpent, and with languid arm,
Delicate, put to proof the lithe Caducean charm.
So done; upon the nymph his eyes he bent
Full of adoring tears and blandishment,
And towards her stept : she, like a moon in wane,
Faded before him, cower'd, nor could restrain
Her fearful sobs, self-folding like a flower
That faints into itself at evening hour
But the God fostering her chilled hand,
She felt the warmth, her eyelids open'd bland,

And, like new flowers at morning song of bees,
Bloom'd, and gave up her honey to the lees.
Into the green-recessed woods they flew ;
Nor grew they pale, as mortal lovers do.

Left to herself, the serpent now began
To change ; her elfin blood in madness ran,
Her mouth foam'd, and the grass, therewith besprent.
Wither'd at dew so sweet and virulent ;
Her eyes in torture fix'd, and anguish drear,
Hot, glaz'd, and wide, with lid-lashes all sear,
Flash'd phosphor and sharp sparks, without one cool-
ing tear.

The colours all inflam'd throughout her train,
She writh'd about, convuls'd with scarlet pain :
A deep volcanian yellow took the place
Of all her milder-mooned body's grace ;
And, as the lava ravishes the mead,
Spoilt all her silver mail, and golden brede ;
Made gloom of all her frecklings, streaks and bars,
Eclips'd her crescents, and lick'd up her stars
So that, in moments few, she was undrest
Of all her sapphires, greens, and amethyst,
And rubious-argent : of all these bereft,
Nothing but pain and ugliness were left.
Still shone her crown ; that vanish'd, also she
Melted and disappear'd as suddenly ;
And in the air, her new voice luting soft,
Cried, ' Lycius ! gentle Lycius ! '—borne aloft
With the bright mists about the mountains hoar
These words dissolv'd : Crete's forests heard no more.

Whither fled Lamia, now a lady bright,
A full-born beauty new and exquisite ?
She fled into that valley they pass o'er
Who go to Corinth from Cenchreas' shore ;
And rested at the foot of those wild hills,
The rugged founts of the Peræan rills.

And of that other ridge whose barren back
Stretches, with all its mist and cloudy rack,
South-westward to Cleone. There she stood
About a young bird's flutter from a wood,
Fair, on a sloping green of mossy tread,
By a clear pool, wherein she passioned
To see herself escaped from so sore ills,
While her robes flaunted with the daffodils.

Ah, happy Lycius !—for she was a maid
More beautiful than ever twisted braid,
Or sigh'd, or blush'd, or on spring-flowered lea
Spread a green kirtle to the minstrelsy.
A virgin purest lipp'd, yet in the lore
Of love deep learned to the red heart's core :
Not one hour old, yet of scintial brain
To unperplex bliss from its neighbour pain ;
Define their pettish limits, and estrange
Their points of contact, and swift counterchange,
Intrigue with the specious chaos, and dispart
Its most ambiguous atoms with sure art ;
As though in Cupid's college she had spent
Sweet days a lovely graduate, still unshent,
And kept his rosy terms in idle languishment.

Why this fair creature chose so fairly
By the wayside to linger, we shall see ;
But first 'tis fit to tell how she could muse
And dream, when in the serpent prison-house,
Of all she list, strange or magnificent :
How, ever, where she will'd, her spirit went ;
Whether to faint Elysium, or where
Down through tress-lifting waves the Nereids fair
Wind into Thetis' bower by many a pearly stair ;
Or where God Bacchus drains his cups divine,
Stretch'd out, at ease, beneath a glutinous pine ;
Or where in Pluto's gardens palatine
Mulciber's columns gleam in far piazzian line

And sometimes into cities she would send
Her dream, with feast and rioting to blend ;
And once, while among mortals dreaming thus,
She saw the young Corinthian Lycius
Charioting foremost in the envious race,
Like a young Jove with calm uneager face,
And fell into a swooning love of him.
Now on the moth-time of that evening dim
He would return that way, as well she knew,
To Corinth from the shore ; for freshly blew
The eastern soft wind, and his galley now
Grated the quaystones with her brazen prow
In port Cenchreas, from Egina isle
Fresh anchor'd ; whither he had been awhile
To sacrifice to Jove, whose temple there
Waits with high marble doors for blood and incense rare.
Jove heard his vows, and better'd his desire ;
For by some freakful chance he made retire
From his companions, and set forth to walk,
Perhaps grown wearied of their Corinth talk :
Over the solitary hills he fared,
Thoughtless at first, but ere eve's star appeared
His phantasy was lost, where reason fades,
In the calm'd twilight of Platonic shades.
Lamia beheld him coming, near, more near—
Close to her passing, in indifference drear,
His silent sandals swept the mossy green ;
So neighbour'd to him, and yet so unseen
She stood : he pass'd, shut up in mysteries,
His mind wrapp'd like his mantle, while her eyes
Follow'd his steps, and her neck regal white
Turn'd—syllabing thus, ' Ah, Lycius bright,
' And will you leave me on the hills alone ?
' Lycius, look back ! and be some pity shown.'
He did ; not with cold wonder fearingly,
But Orpheus-like at an Eurydice ;
For so delicious were the words she sung,
It seem'd he had loved them a whole summer long :

And soon his eyes had drunk her beauty up,
 Leaving no drop in the bewildering cup,
 And still the cup was full,—while he, afraid
 Lest she should vanish ere his lip had paid
 Due adoration, thus began to adore ;
 Her soft look growing coy, she saw his chain so
 sure

‘ Leave thee alone ! Look back ! Ah, Goddess, see .
 ‘ Whether my eyes can ever turn from thee !
 ‘ For pity do not this sad heart belie—
 ‘ Even as thou vanishest so shall I die.
 ‘ Stay ! though a Naiad of the rivers, stay !
 ‘ To thy far wishes will thy streams obey .
 ‘ Stay ! though the greenest woods be thy domain
 ‘ Alone they can drink up the morning rain ;
 ‘ Though a descended Pleiad, will not one
 ‘ Of thine harmonious sisters keep in tune
 ‘ Thy spheres, and as thy silver proxy shine ?
 ‘ So sweetly to these ravish’d ears of mine
 ‘ Came thy sweet greeting, that if thou shouldst fade
 ‘ Thy memory will waste me to a shade .—
 ‘ For pity do not melt ! — ‘ If I should stay,’
 aid Lamia, ‘ here, upon this floor of clay,
 And pain my steps upon these flowers too rough,
 ‘ What canst thou say or do of charm enough
 ‘ To dull the nice remembrance of my home ?
 ‘ Thou canst not ask me with thee here to roam
 ‘ Over these hills and vales, where no joy is,—
 ‘ Empty of immortality and bliss !
 ‘ Thou art a scholar, Lycius, and must know
 ‘ That finer spirits cannot breathe below
 ‘ In human climes, and live : Alas ! poor youth,
 ‘ What taste of purer air hast thou to soothe
 ‘ My essence ? What serener palaces,
 ‘ Where I may all my many senses please,
 ‘ And by mysterious sleights a hundred thirsts appease ?
 ‘ It cannot be—Adieu !’ So said, she rose
 Tiptoe with white arms spread. He, sick to lose

The amorous promise of her lone complain,
Swoon'd, murmuring of love, and pale with pain.
The cruel lady, without any show
Of sorrow for her tender favourite's woe,
But rather, if her eyes could brighter be,
With brighter eyes and slow amenity,
Put her new lips to his, and gave afresh
The life she had so tangled in her mesh :
And as he from one trance was wakening
Into another, she began to sing,
Happy in beauty, life, and love, and everything,
A song of love, too sweet for earthly lyres,
While, like held breath, the stars drew in their panting
fires.

And then she whisper'd in such trembling tone,
As those who, safe together met alone
For the first time through many anguish'd days,
Use other speech than looks ; bidding him raise
His drooping head, and clear his soul of doubt,
For that she was a woman, and without
Any more subtle fluid in her veins
Than throbbing blood, and that the self-same pains
Inhabited her frail-strung heart as his.
And next she wonder'd how his eyes could miss
Her face so long in Corinth, where, she said,
She dwelt but half retir'd, and there had led
Days happy as the gold coin could invent
Without the aid of love ; yet in content.
Till she saw him, as once she pass'd him by,
Where 'gainst a column he lent thoughtfully
At Venus' temple porch, 'mid baskets heap'd
Of amorous herbs and flowers, newly reap'd
Late on that eve, as 'twas the night before
The Adonian feast ; whereof she saw no more,
But wept alone those days, for why should she
adore ?

Lycius from death awoke into amaze,
To see her still, and singing so sweet lays ;

'Then from amaze into delight he fell
To hear her whisper woman's lore so well ;
And every word she spake entic'd him on
To unperplex'd delight and pleasure known.
Let the mad poets say whate'er they please
Of the sweets of Fairies, Peris, Goddesses,
There is not such a treat among them all,
Haunters of cavern, lake, and waterfall,
As-a real woman, lineal indeed
From Pyrrha's pebbles or old Adam's seed
Thus gentle Lamia judged, and judged aright,
That Lycius could not love in half a fright,
So threw the goddess off, and won his heart
More pleasantly by playing woman's part,
With no more awe than what her beauty gave,-
That, while it smote, still guaranteed to save.
Lycius to all made eloquent reply, -
Marrying to every word a twin-born sigh ;
And last, pointing to Corinth, ask'd her sweet,
If twas too far that night for her soft feet
The way was short, for Lamia's eagerness
Made, by a spell, the triple league decrease
To a few paces , not at all surmised
By blinded Lycius, so in her comprised.
They pass'd the city gates, he knew not how,
So noiseless, and he never thought to know.

As men talk in a dream, so Corinth all,
Throughout her palaces imperial,
And all her populous streets and temples lewd,
Mutter'd, like tempest in the distance brew'd,
To the wide-spreaded night above her towers
Men, women, rich and poor, in the cool hours,
Shuffled their sandals o'er the pavement white,
Companion'd or alone ; while many a light
Flared, here and there, from wealthy festivals,
And threw their moving shadows on the walls,

Or found them cluster'd in the corniced shade
Of some arch'd temple door, or dusky colonnade.

Muffling his face, of greeting friends in fear,
Her fingers he press'd hard, as one came near
With curl'd gray beard, sharp eyes, and smooth bald
crown,

Slow-stepp'd, and robed in philosophic gown :
Lycius shrank closer, as they met and past,
Into his mantle, adding wings to haste,
While hurried Lamia trembled : 'Ah,' said he,
'Why do you shudder, love, so ruefully ?
'Why does your tender palm dissolve in dew ?'—
'I'm wearied,' said fair Lamia : 'tell me who
'Is that old man ? I cannot bring to mind'
'His features :—Lycius ! wherefore did you blind
'Yourself from his quick eyes ?' Lycius replied,
'Tis Apollonius sage, my trusty guide
'And good instructor, but to-night he seems
'The ghost of folly haunting my sweet dreams.'

While yet he spake they had arrived before
A-pillar'd porch, with lofty portal door,
Where hung a silver lamp, whose phosphor glow
Reflected in the slabbed steps below,
Mild as a star in water ; for so new,
And so unsullied was the marble hue,
So through the crystal polish, liquid fine,
Ran the dark veins, that none but feet divine
Could e'er have touch'd there. Sounds Æolian
Breath'd from the hinges, as the ample span
Of the wide doors disclos'd a place unknown
Some time to any, but those two alone,
And a few Persian mutes, who that same year
Were seen about the markets : none knew where
They could inhabit ; the most curious
Were foil'd, who watch'd to trace them to their house :

And but the flitter-winged verse must tell,
 For truth's sake, what woe afterwards befell,
 'Twould humour many a heart to leave them thus,
 Shut from the busy world of more incredulous.

PART II

Love in a hut, with water and a crust,
 Is—Love, forgive us!—cinders, ashes, dust;
 Love in a palace is perhaps at last
 More grievous torment than a hermit's fast:—
 That is a doubtful tale from faery land,
 Hard for the non-elect to understand.
 Had Lycius liv'd to hand his story down,
 He might have given the moral a fresh frown,
 Or clench'd it quite. but too short was their bliss
 To breed distrust and hate, that make the soft voice hiss.
 Beside, there, nightly, with terrific glare,
 Love, jealous grown of so complete a pair,
 Hover'd and buzz'd his wings, with fearful roar,
 Above the lintel of their chamber door,
 And down the passage cast a glow upon the floor.

For all this came a ruin. side by side
 They were enthroned, in the even tide,
 Upon a couch, near to a curtaining
 Whose airy texture, from a golden string,
 Floated into the room, and let appear
 Unveil'd the summer heaven, blue and clear,
 Betwixt two marble shafts —there they reposed,
 Where use had made it sweet, with eyelids closed,
 - Saving a tithe which love still open kept,
 That they might see each other while they almost slept;
 When from the slope side of a suburb hill,
 Deafening the swallow's twitter, came a thrill
 Of trumpets—Lycius started—the sounds fled,
 But left a thought, a buzzing in his head.

For the first time, since first he harbour'd in
That purple-lined palace of sweet sin,
His spirit pass'd beyond its golden bourn
Into the noisy world almost forsworn.
The lady, ever watchful, penetrant,
Saw this with pain, so arguing a want
Of something more, more than her empery
Of joys; and she began to moan and sigh
Because he mused beyond her, knowing well
That but a moment's thought is passion's passing bell.
'Why do you sigh, fair creature?' whisper'd he:
'Why do you think?' return'd she tenderly
'You have deserted me,—where am I now?'
'Not in your heart while care weighs on your brow:
'No, no, you have dismiss'd me; and I go
'From your breast houseless. ay, it must be so.'
He answer'd, bending to her open eyes,
Where he was murrow'd small in paradise,
'My silver planet, both of eve and morn!
'Why will you plead yourself so sad forlorn,
'While I am striving how to fill my heart
'With deeper crimson, and a double smart?
'How to entangle, trammel up and snare
'Your soul in mine, and labyrinth you there
'Like the hid scent in an unbudded rose?
'Ay, a sweet kiss—you see your mighty woes.
'My thoughts' shall I unveil them? Listen then!
'What mortal hath a prize, that other men
'May be confounded and abash'd withal,
'But lets it sometimes pace abroad majestic,
'And triumph, as in thee I should rejoice
'Amid the hoarse alarm of Corinth's voice.
'Let my foes choke, and my friends shout afar,
'While through the thronged streets your bridal car
'Wheels round its dazzling spokes.'—The lady's cheek
Trembled, she nothing said, but, pale and meek,
Arose and knelt before him, wept a rain
Of sorrows at his words; at last with pain

Beseeching him, the while his hand she wrung,
 To change his purpose He thereat was stung,
 Perverse, with stronger fancy to reclaim
 Her wild and timid nature to his aim :
 Besides, for all his love, in self despite,
 Against his better self, he took delight
 Luxurious in her sorrows, soft and new.
 His passion, cruel grown, took on a hue
 Fierce and sanguineous as 'twas possible
 In one whose brow had no dark veins to swell.
 Fine was the mitigated fury, like
 Apollo's presence when in act to strike
 The serpent—Ha, the serpent ! certes, she
 Was none She burnt, she lov'd the tyranny,
 And, all subdued, consented to the hour
 When to the bridal he should lead his paramour.
 Whispering in midnight silence, said the youth,
 ' Sure some sweet name thou hast, though, by my truth,
 ' I have not ask'd it, ever thinking thee
 ' Not mortal, but of heavenly progeny
 ' As still I do Hast any mortal name,
 ' Fit appellation for this dazzling frame ?
 ' Or friends or kinsfolk on the citied earth,
 ' To share our marriage feast and nuptial mirth ?'
 ' I have no friends,' said Lamia, ' no, not one,
 ' My presence in wide Corinth hardly known :
 ' My parents' bones are in their dusty urns
 ' Sepulchred, where no kindled incense burns,
 ' Seeing all their luckless race are dead, save me,—
 ' And I neglect the holy rite for thee
 ' Even as you list invite your many guests ;
 ' But if, as now it seems, your vision rests
 ' With any pleasure on me, do not bid
 ' Old Apollonius—from him keep me hid '
 Lycius, perplex'd at words so blind and blank,
 Made close inquiry ; from whose touch she shrink,
 Feigning a sleep ; and he to the dull shade
 Of deep sleep in a moment was betray'd

It was the custom then to bring away
The bride from home at blushing shut of day,
Veil'd, in a chariot, heralded along
By strewn flowers, torches, and a marriage song
With other pageants . but this fair unknown
Had not a friend So being left alone
(Lycius was gone to summon all his kin),
And knowing surely she could never win
His foolish heart from its mad pompousness,
She set herself, high-thoughted, how to dress
The misery in fit magnificence.
She did so, but 'tis doubtful how and whence
Came, and who were her subtle servitors.
About the halls, and to and from the doors,
There was a noise of wings, till in short space
The glowing banquet-room shone with wide-arched
grace

A haunting music, sole perhaps and lone
Supportress of the faery-roof, made moan
Throughout, as fearful the whole charm might fade.
Fresh carved cedar, mimicking a glade
Of palm and plantain, met from either side,
High in the midst, in honour of the bride
Two palms and then two plantains, and so on,
From either side their stems branch'd one to one
All down the aisled place , and beneath all
There ran a stream of lamps straight on from wall
wall.

So canopied, lay an untasted feast
Teeming with odours. Lamia, regal drest,
Silently paced about, and as she went,
In pale contented sort of discontent,
Mission'd her viewless servants to enrich
The fretted splendour of each nook and niche.
Between the tree-stems, marbled plain at first,
Came jasper panels ; then, anon, there burst
Forth creeping imagery of slighter trees,
And with the larger wove in small intricacies.



ISAPFIIA,
OR THE POT O' NASIL

'Weeping through her hair'

Each by a sacred tripod held aloft,
Whose slender feet wide-swerv'd upon the soft
Wool-woofed carpets : fifty wreaths of smoke
From fifty censers their light voyage took
To the high roof, still mimick'd as they rose
Along the mirror'd walls by twin-clouds odorous.
Twelve sphered tables, by silk seats insphered,
High as the level of a man's breast rear'd
On libbard's paws, upheld the heavy gold
Of cups and goblets, and the store thrice told
Of Ceres' horn, and, in huge vessels, wine
Came from the gloomy tun with merry shine.
Thus loaded with a feast the tables stood,
Each shrining in the midst the image of a God.

When in an antechamber every guest
Had felt the cold full sponge to pleasure press'd,
By ministering slaves, upon his hands and feet,
And fragrant oils with ceremony meet
Pour'd on his hair, they all mov'd to the feast
In white robes, and themselves in order placed
Around the silken couches, wondering
Whence all this mighty cost and blaze of wealth
could spring.

Soft went the music the soft air along,
While fluent Greek a vowel'd under-song
Keep up among the guests, discoursing low
At first, for scarcely was the wine at flow ;
But when the happy vintage touch'd their brains,
Louder they talk, and louder come the strains
Of powerful instruments :—the gorgeous dyes,
The space, the splendour of the draperies,
The roof of awful richness, nectarous cheer,
Beautiful slaves, and Lamia's self, appear,
Now, when the wine has done its rosy deed,
And every soul from human trammels freed,
No more so strange ; for merry wine, sweet wine,
Will make Elysian shades not too fair, too divine.

Soon was God Bacchus at meridian height ;
 Flush'd were their cheeks, and bright eyes double bright :
 Garlands of every green, and every scent
 From vales deflower'd, or forest-trees branch-rent,
 In baskets of bright osier'd gold were brought
 High as the handles heap'd, to suit the thought
 Of every guest ; that each, as he did please,
 Might fancy-fit his brows, silk-pillow'd at his ease.

What wreath for Lamia ? What for Lycius ?
 What for the sage, old Apollonius ?
 Upon her aching forehead be there hung
 The leaves of willow and of adder's tongue ;
 And for the youth, quick, let us strip for him
 The thyrsus, that his watching eyes may swim
 Into forgetfulness, and, for the sage,
 Let spear-grass and the spiteful thistle wage
 War on his temples Do not all charms fly
 At the mere touch of cold philosophy ?
 There was an awful rainbow once in heaven
 We know her woof, her texture ; she is given
 the dull catalogue of common things
 philosophy will clip an Angel's wings,
 conquer all mysteries by rule and line,
 empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine—
 Unweave a rainbow, as it erewhile made
 The tender-person'd Lamia melt into a shade.

By her glad Lycius sitting, in chief place,
 Scarce saw in all the room another face,
 Till, checking his love-trance, a cup he took
 Full brimm'd, and opposite sent forth a look
 'Cross the broad table, to beseech a glance
 From his old teacher's wrinkled countenance,
 And pledge him The bald-head philosopher
 Had fix'd his eye, without a twinkle or stir,
 Full on the alarmed beauty of the bride,
 Browbeating her fair form, and troubling her sweet pride.

Lycius then press'd her hand, with devout touch,
As pale it lay upon the rosy couch.
Twas icy, and the cold ran through his veins;
Then sudden it grew hot, and all the pains
Of an unnatural heat shot to his heart.
'Lamia, what means this? Wherefore dost thou start?
'Know'st thou that man?' Poor Lamia answer'd not.
He gaz'd into her eyes, and not a jot
Own'd they the love-lorn piteous appeal:
'More, more he gaz'd: his human senses reel:
Some hungry spell that loveliness absorbs;
There was no recognition in those orbs.
'Lamia!' he cried—and no soft-toned reply.
The many heard, and the loud revelry
Grew hush; the stately music no more breathes;
The myrtle sicken'd in a thousand wreaths.
By faint degrees, voice, lute, and pleasure ceased;
A deadly silence step by step increased,
Until it seem'd a horrid presence there,
And not a man but felt the terror in his hair
'Lamia!' he shriek'd; and nothing but the shriek
With its sad echo did the silence break.
'Begone, foul dream!' he cried, gazing again
In the bride's face, where now no azure vein
Wander'd on fair-spaced temples; no soft bloom
Misted the cheek; no passion to illumine
The deep-recessed vision.—all was blight;
Lamia, no longer fair, there sat a deadly white.
'Shut, shut those juggling eyes, thou ruthless man!
'Turn them aside, wretch! or the righteous ban
'Of all the Gods, whose dreadful images
'Here represent their shadowy presences,
'May pierce them on the sudden with the thorn
'Of painful blindness; leaving thee forlorn,
'In trembling dotage to the feeblest fright
'Of conscience, for their long offended might,
'For all thine impious proud-heart sophistries,
'Unlawful magic, and enticing lies.

'Corinthians! look upon that gray-beard wretch!
 'Mark how, possess'd, his lashless eyelids stretch
 'Around his demon eyes! Corinthians, see!
 'My sweet bride withers at their potency'
 'Fool!' said the sophist, in an undertone
 Gruff with contempt; which a death-nighing moan
 From Lycius answer'd, as heart-struck and lost,
 He sank supine beside the aching ghost.
 'Fool! Fool!' repeated he, while his eyes still
 Relented not, nor mov'd, 'from every ill
 'Of life have I preserv'd thee to this day,
 'And shall I see thee made a serpent's prey?'
 Then Lamia breath'd death breath, the sophist's eye,
 Like a sharp spear, went through her utterly,
 Keen, cruel, perçant, stinging. she, as well
 As her weak hand could any meaning tell,
 Motion'd him to be silent, vainly so,
 He look'd and look'd again a level—No!
 'A serpent!' echoed he; no sooner said,
 Than with a frightful scream she vanished:
 And Lycius' arms were empty of delight,
 As were his limbs of life, from that same night.
 On the high couch he lay!—his friends came round—
 Supported him—no pulse, or breath they found,
 And, in its marriage robe, the heavy body wound.¹

¹ Philostratus, in his fourth book *De Vita Apollonii*, hath a memorable instance in this kind, which I may not omit, of one Menippus Lycius, a young man twenty-five years of age, that going betwixt Cenchreas and Corinth, met such a phryniasm in the habit of a fair gentlewoman, which, taking him by the hand, carried him home to her house, in the suburbs of Corinth, and told him she was a Phœnician by birth, and if he would tarry with her, he should hear her sing and play, and drink such wine as never any drank, and no man should molest him, but she, being fair and lovely, would live and die with him, that was fair and lovely to behold. The young man, a philosopher, otherwise staid and discreet, able to moderate his passions, though not thus of love, tamed with her a while to his great content, and at last married her, to whose wedding, amongst other guests, came Apollonius, who, by some probable conjectures, found her out to be a serpent, a lamia; and that all her furniture was, like Tantalus' gold, described by Homer, no substance but mere illusions. When she saw herself descried, she wept, and desired Apollonius to be silent, but he would not be moved, and thereupon she, plate, house, and all that was in it, vanished in an instant, many thousands took notice of this fact, for it was done in the midst of Greece.

ISABELLA; OR, THE POT OF BASIL

I

FAIR Isabel, poor simple Isabel!

Lorenzo, a young palmer in Love's eye
They could not in the self-same mansion dwell
Without some stir of heart, some malady;
They could not sit at meals but feel how well
It soothed each to be the other by;
They could not, sure, beneath the same roof sleep
But to each other dream, and nightly-weep.

II

With every morn their love grew tenderer,
With every eve deeper and tenderer still;
He might not in house, field, or garden stir,
But her full shape would all his seeing fill;
And his continual voice was pleasanter
To her, than noise of trees or hidden rill;
Her lute-string gave an echo of his name,
She spoil'd her half-done broidery with the same

III

He knew whose gentle hand was at the latch,
Before the door had given her to his eyes;
And from her chamber-window he would catch
Her beauty farther than the falcon spies,
And constant as her vespers would he watch,
Because her face was turn'd to the same skies;
And with sick longing all the night outwear,
To hear her morning-step upon the stair

- IV

A whole long month of May in this sad plight
 Made their cheeks paler by the break of June
 'To-morrow will I bow to my delight,
 To-morrow will I ask my lady's boon'—
 'O may I never see another night,
 Lorenzo, if thy lips breathe not love's tune.'—
 So spake they to their pillows, but, alas,
 Honeyless days and days did he let pass ; -

V

Until sweet Isabella's untouch'd cheek
 Fell sick within the rose's just domain,
 Fell thin as a young mother's, who doth seek
 By every lull to cool her infant's pain .
 'How ill she is,' said he 'I may not speak,
 And yet I will, and tell my love all plain
 If looks speak love-laws, I will drink her tears,
 And at the least 'twill startle off her cares' -

VI

So said he one fair morning, and all day
 His heart beat awfully against his side ;
 And to his heart he inwardly did pray
 For power to speak, but still the ruddy tide
 Stifled his voice, and puls'd resolve away—
 Fever'd his high conceit of such a bride,
 Yet brought him to the meekness of a child :
 Alas ! when passion is both meek and wild !

VII

So once more he had wak'd and anguished
 A dreary night of love and misery,
 If Isabel's quick eye had not been wed
 To every symbol on his forehead high ;
 She saw it waxing very pale and dead,
 And straight all flush'd, so, lisped tenderly,

'Lorenzo'—here she ceas'd her timid quest,
But in her tone and look he read the rest.

VIII

'O Isabella, I can half perceive
That I may speak my grief into thine ear;
If thou didst ever any thing believe,
Believe how I love thee, believe how near
My soul is to its doom. I would not grieve
Thy hand by unwelcome pressing, would not fear
Thine eyes by gazing; but I cannot live
Another night, and not my passion shrive.

IX

'Love! thou art leading me from wintry cold,
Lady! thou leadest me to summer clime,
And I must taste the blossoms that unfold
In its ripe warmth this gracious morning time.
So said, his erewhile timid lips grew bold,
And poesied with hers in dewy rhyme.
Great bliss was with them, and great happiness
Grew, like a lusty flower in June's caress.

X

Parting they seem'd to tread upon the air,
Twin roses by the zephyr blown apart
Only to meet again more close, and share
The inward fragrance of each other's heart.
She, to her chamber gone, a ditty fair
Sang, of delicious love and honey'd dart;
He with light steps went up a western hill,
And bade the sun farewell, and joy'd his fill.

XI

All close they met again, before the dusk
Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,
All close they met, all eves, before the dusk
Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,

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Close in a bower of hyacinth and musk,
Unknown of any, free from whispering tale.
Ah ! better had it been for ever so,
Than idle ears should pleasure in their woe.

XII

Were they unhappy then ?—It cannot be—
Too many tears for lovers have been shed,
Too many sighs give we to them in lee,
Too much of pity after they are dead,
Too many doleful stories do we see,
Whose matter in bright gold were best be read ;
Except in such a page where Theseus' spouse
Over the pathless waves towards him bows

XIII

But, for the general award of love,
The little sweet doth kill much bitterness ;
Though Dido silent is in under-grove,
And Isabella's was a great distress,
Though young Lorenzo in warm Indian clove
Was not embalm'd, this truth is not the less—
Even bees, the little almsmen of spring-bowers,
Know there is richest juice in poison-flowers.

XIV

With her two brothers this fair lady dwelt,
Enriched from ancestral merchandise,
And for them many a weary hand did swelt
In torched mines and noisy factories,
And many once proud-quiver'd loins did melt
In blood from stinging whip,—with hollow eyes
Many all day in dazzling river stood,
To take the rich-ored driftings of the flood.

XV

For them the Ceylon diver held his breath,
And went all naked to the hungry shark ;

For them his ears gush'd blood ; for them in death
 The seal on the cold ice with piteous bark
 Lay full of darts.; for them alone did seethe
 A thousand men in troubles wide and dark :
 Half-ignorant, they turn'd an easy wheel,
 That set sharp racks at work, to pinch and peel.

XVI

Why were they proud ? Because their marble founts
 Gush'd with more pride than do a wretch's tears ?—
 Why were they proud ? Because fair orange-mounts
 Were of more soft ascent than lazar stairs ?—
 Why were they proud ? Because red-lin'd accounts
 Were richer than the songs of Grecian years ?—
 Why were they proud ? again we ask aloud,
 Why in the name of Glory were they proud ?

XVII

Yet were these Florentines as self-retired
 In hungry pride and gainful cowardice,
 As two close Hebrews in that land inspired,
 Pal'd in and vineyarded from beggar-spies,
 The hawks of ship-mast forests—the untired
 And pannier'd mules for ducats and old lies—
 Quick cat's-paws on the generous stray-away,—
 Great wits in Spanish, Tuscan, and Malay.

XVIII

How was it these same ledger-men could spy
 Fair Isabella in her downy nest ?
 How could they find out in Lorenzo's eye
 A straying from his toil ? Hot Egypt's pest
 Into their vision covetous and sly !
 How could these money-bags see east and west ?
 Yet so they did—and every dealer fair
 Must see behind, as doth the hunted hare.

XIX

O eloquent and fam'd Boccaccio !
 Of thee we now should ask forgiving boon,
 And of thy spicy myrtles as they blow,
 And of thy roses amorous of the moon,
 And of thy lilies, that do paler grow
 Now they can no more hear thy ghittern's tune,
 For venturing syllables that ill bescem
 The quiet glooms of such a piteous theme.

XX

Grant thou a pardon here, and then the tale
 Shall move on soberly, as it is meet,
 There is no other crime, no mad assail
 To make old prose in modern rhyme more sweet :
 But it is done—succeed the verse or fail—
 To honour thee, and thy gone spirit greet ;
 To stead thee as a verse in English tongue,
 An echo of thee in the north-wind sung.

XXI

These brethren having found by many signs
 What love Lorenzo for their sister had, -
 And how she lov'd him too, each unconfines
 His bitter thoughts to other, well nigh mad
 That he, the servant of their trade designs,
 Should in their sister's love be blithe and glad,
 When 'twas their plan to coax her by degrees
 To some high noble and his olive-trees

XXII

And many a jealous conference had they,
 And many times they bit their lips alone,
 Before they fix'd upon a surest way
 To make the youngster for his crime atone ;

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And at the last, these men of cruel clay
Cut Mercy with a sharp knife to the bone ;
For they resolved in some forest dim
To kill Lorenzo, and there bury him.

XXIII

So on a pleasant morning, as he leant
Into the sun-rise, o'er the balustrade
Of the garden-terrace, towards him they bent
Their footing through the dew's ; and to him said.
' You seem there in the quiet of content,
Lorenzo, and we are most loth to invade
Calm speculation ; but if you are wise,
Bestride your steed while cold is in the skies,

XXIV

' To-day we purpose, ay, this hour we mount
To spur three leagues towards the Apennine ;
Come down, we pray thee, ere the hot sun count
His dewy rosary on the eglantine '
Lorenzo, courteously as he was wont,
Bow'd a fair greeting to these serpents' whine .
And went in haste, to get in readiness,
With belt, and spur, and bracing huntsman's dress.

XXV

And as he to the court-yard pass'd along,
Each third step did he pause, and listen'd oft
If he could hear his lady's matin-song,
Or the light whisper of her footstep soft ;
And as he thus over his passion hung,
He heard a laugh full musical aloft,
When, looking up, he saw her features bright
Smile through an indoor lattice, all delight .

XXVI

'Love, Isabel!' said he, 'I was in pain
 Lest I should miss to bid thee a good morrow :
 Ah ! what if I should lose thee, when so fain
 I am to stifle all the heavy sorrow
 Of a poor three hours' absence? but we'll gain
 Out of the amorous dark what day doth borrow
 Good-bye! I'll soon be back.'—'Good-bye!' said she:—
 And as he went she chanted merrily.

XXVII

So the two brothers and their murder'd man
 -Rode past fair Florence, to where Arno's stream
 Gurgles through straiten'd banks, and still doth fan
 Itself with dancing bulrush, and the bream
 Keeps head against the freshets. . Sick and wan
 The brothers' faces in the ford did seem,
 Lorenzo's flush with love.—They passed the water
 Into a forest quiet for the slaughter.

XXVIII

There was Lorenzo slain and buried in,
 There in that forest did his great love cease ;
 Ah ! when a soul doth thus its freedom win,
 It aches in loneliness—is ill at peace
 As the break-covert bloodhounds of such sin .
 They dipp'd their swords in the water, and did tease
 Their horses homeward, with convulsed spur,
 Each richer by his being a murderèr.

XXIX

They told their sister how, with sudden speed,
 Lorenzo had ta'en ship for foreign lands,
 Because of some great urgency and need
 In their affairs, requiring trusty hands.

Poor Girl! put on thy stifling widow's weed,
And 'scape at once from Hope's accursed bands;
To-day thou wilt not see him, nor to-morrow,
And the next day will be a day of sorrow.

XXX

- She weeps alone for pleasures not to be;
Sorely she wept until the night came on,
And then, instead of love, O misery!
She brooded o'er the luxury alone;
His image in the dusk she seem'd to see,
And to the silence made a gentle moan,
Spreading her perfect arms upon the air,
And on her couch low murmuring, 'Where? O where?'

XXXI

But Selfishness, Love's cousin, held not long
Its fiery vigil in her single breast,
She fretted for the golden hour, and hung
Upon the time with feverish unrest—
Not long—for soon into her heart a throng
Of higher occupants, a richer zest,
Came tragic; passion not to be subdued,
And sorrow for her love in travels rude.

XXXII

In the mid days of autumn, on their eves
The breath of Winter comes from far away,
And the sick west continually bereaves
Of some gold tinge, and plays a roundelay
Of death among the bushes, and the leaves,
To make all bare before he dares to stray
From his north cavern. So sweet Isabel
By gradual decay from beauty fell,

XXXIII

Because Lorenzo came not. Oftentimes
 She ask'd her brothers, with an eye all pale,
 Striving to be itself, what dungeon climes
 Could keep him off so long? They spake a tale
 Time after time, to quiet her Their crimes
 Came on them, like a smoke from Hinnom's vale;
 And every night in dreams they groan'd aloud,
 To see their sister in her snowy shroud.

XXXIV

And she had died in drowsy ignorance,
 But for a thing more deadly-dark than all;
 It came like a fierce potion, drunk by chance,
 Which saves a sick man from the feather'd pall
 For some few gasping moments; like a lance
 Waking an Indian from his cloudy hall
 With cruel pierce, and bringing him again
 Sense of the gnawing fire at heart and brain.

XXXV

It was a vision —In the drowsy gloom,
 The dull of midnight, at her couch's foot
 Lorenzo stood, and wept the forest tomb
 Had marr'd his glossy hair which once could shoot
 Lustre into the sun, and put cold doom
 Upon his lips, and taken the soft lute
 From his lorn voice, and past his loamed ears
 Had made a miry channel for his tears.

XXXVI

Strange sound it was, when the pale shadow spake;
 For there was striving, in its piteous tongue,
 To speak as when on earth it was awake,
 And Isabella on its music hung:

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Languor there was in it, and tremulous shake,
As in a palsied Druid's harp unstrung,
And through it moan'd a ghostly under-song,
Like hoarse night-gusts sepulchral briars among.

XXXVII

Its eyes, though wild, were still all dewy bright
With love, and kept all phantom fear aloof
From the poor girl by magic of their light,
The while it did unthread the horrid woof
Of the late darken'd time,—the murderous spite
Of pride and avarice,—the dark pine roof
In the forest,—and the sodden turfed dell,
Where, without any word, from stabs he fell,

XXXVIII

Saying, moreover, 'Isabel, my sweet !
Red whortle-berries droop above my head,
And a large flint-stone weighs upon my feet,
Around me beeches and high chestnuts shed
Their leaves and prickly nuts ; a sheep-fold bleat
Comes from beyond the river to my bed :
Go, shed one tear upon my heather-bloom,
And it shall comfort me within the tomb

XXXIX

'I am a shadow now, alas ! alas !
Upon the skirts of human nature dwelling
Alone. I chant alone the holy mass,
While little sounds of life are round me knelling,
And glossy bees at noon do fieldward pass,
And many a chapel-bell the hour is telling,
Paining me through those sounds grow strange to me,
And thou art distant in Humanity

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XL

'I know what was, I feel full well what is,
And I should rage, if spirits could go mad;
Though I forget the taste of earthly bliss,
That paleness warms my grave, as though I had
A Seraph chosen from the bright abyss
To be my spouse. thy paleness makes me glad;
Thy beauty grows upon me, and I feel
A greater love through all my essence steal.'

XLI

The Spirit mourn'd 'Adieu!'—dissolv'd, and left
The atom darkness in a slow turmoil;
As when of healthful midnight sleep bereft,
Thinking on rugged hours and fruitless toil,
We put our eyes into a pillowy cleft,
And see the spangly gloom froth up and boil:
It made sad Isabella's eyelids ache,
And in the dawn she started up awake;

XLII

Ha! ha!' said she, 'I knew not this hard life,
I thought the worst was simple misery;
I thought some Fate with pleasure or with strife
Portion'd us—happy days, or else to die;
But there is crime—a brother's bloody knife'
Sweet Spirit, thou hast school'd my infancy:
I'll visit thee for this, and kiss thine eyes,
And greet thee morn and even, in the skies.'

XLIII

When the full morning came, she had devis'd
How she might secret to the forest hie,
How she might find the clay, so dearly priz'd,
And sing to it one latest lullaby,



THE END OF THE WORLD

'She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from
mortal taint'

How her short absence might be unsurmised,
 While she the inmost of the dream would try.
 Resolv'd, she took with her an aged nurse,
 And went into that dismal forest-hearse.

XLIV

See, as they creep along the river side,
 How she doth whisper to that aged Dame,
 And, after looking round the champaign wide,
 Shows her a knife.—'What feverish hectic flame
 Burns in thee, child?—What good can thee betide,
 That thou shouldst smile again?'—The evening
 came,
 And they had found Lorenzo's earthly bed;
 The flint was there, the berries at his head.

XLV

Who hath not loiter'd in a green church-yard,
 And let his spuit, like a demon-mole,
 Work through the clayey soil and gravel hard,
 To see skull, coffin'd bones, and funeral stole,
 Pitying each form that hungry Death hath marr'd,
 And filling it once more with human soul?
 Ah! this is holiday to what was felt
 When Isabella by Lorenzo knelt.

XLVI

She gaz'd into the fresh-thrown mould, as though
 One glance did fully all its secrets tell,
 Clearly she saw, as other eyes would-know
 Pale limbs at bottom of a crystal well,
 Upon the murderous spot she seem'd to grow,
 Like to a native lily of the dell:
 Then with her knife, all sudden, she began
 To dig more fervently than misers can.

XLVII

Soon she turn'd up a soiled glove, whereon
 Her silk had play'd in purple phantasies,
 She kiss'd it with a lip more chill than stone,
 And put it in her bosom, where it dries
 And freezes utterly unto the bone
 Those dainties made to still an infant's cries .
 Then 'gan she work again ; nor stay'd her care,
 But to throw back at times her veiling hair.

XLVIII

That old nurse stood beside her wondering,
 Until her heart felt pity to the core
 At sight of such a dismal labouring,
 And so she kneeled, with her locks all hoar,
 And put her lean hands to the horrid thing
 Three hours they labour'd at this travail sore ;
 At last they felt the kernel of the grave,
 And Isabella did not stamp and rave.

XLIX

Ah ! wherefore all this wormy circumstance?
 Why linger at the yawning tomb so long ?
 O for the gentleness of old Romance,
 The simple plaining of a minstrel's song !
 Fair reader, at the old tale take a glance,
 For here, in truth, it doth not well belong
 To speak :—O turn thee to the very tale,
 And taste the music of that vision pale.

L

With duller steel than the Perséan sword
 They cut away no formless monster's head,
 But one, whose gentleness did well accord
 With death, as life. The ancient harps have said,

Love never dies, but lives, immortal Lord :
 If Love impersonate was ever dead,
 Pale Isabella kiss'd it, and low moan'd.
 'Twas love; cold—dead indeed, but not dethron'd.

LI

In anxious secrecy they took it home,
 And then the prize was all for Isabel.
 She calm'd its wild hair with a golden comb,
 And all around each eye's sepulchral cell
 Pointed each fringed lash, the smeared loam
 With tears, as chilly as a dripping well,
 She drench'd away : and still she comb'd, and kept
 Sighing all day—and still she kiss'd and wept.

LII

Then in a silken scarf,—sweet with the dews
 Of precious flowers pluck'd in Araby,
 And divine liquids come with odorous ooze
 Through the cold serpent-pipe refreshfully,—
 She wrapp'd it up ; and for its tomb did choose
 A garden-pot, wherein she laid it by,
 And cover'd it with mould, and o'er it set
 Sweet Basil, which her tears kept ever wet.

LIII

And she forgot the stars, the moon, and sun,
 And she forgot the blue above the trees,
 And she forgot the dells where waters run,
 And she forgot the chilly autumn breeze :
 She had no knowledge when the day was done,
 And the new morn she saw not : but in peace
 Hung over her sweet Basil evermore,
 And moisten'd it with tears unto the core

LIV

And so she ever fed it with thin tears,
 Whence thick, and green, and beautiful it grew,
 So that it smelt more balmy than its peers
 Of Basil-tufts in Florence, for it drew
 Nurture besides, and life, from human fears,
 From the fast-mouldering head there shut from view:
 So that the jewel, safely casketed,
 Came forth, and in perfumed leafits spread.

LV

O Melancholy, linger here awhile !
 O Music, Music, breathe despondingly !
 O Echo, Echo, from some sombre isle,
 Unknown, Lethean, sigh to us !—O sigh !
 Spirits in grief, lift up your heads, and smile ;
 Lift up your heads, sweet Spirits, heavily,
 And make a pale light in your cypress glooms,
 Tinting with silver wan your marble tombs

LVI

Moan hither, all ye syllables of woe,
 From the deep throat of sad Melpomene !
 Through bronzed lyre in tragic order go,
 And touch the strings into a mystery ;
 Sound mournfully upon the winds and low ;
 For simple Isabel is soon to be
 Among the dead : She withers, like a palm
 Cut by an-Indian for its juicy balm.

LVII

O leave the palm to wither by itself ;
 Let not quick Winter chill its dying hour !—
 It may not be—those Baalites of pelt,
 Her brethren, noted the continual shower

ISABELLA; OR, THE POT OF BASIL

From her dead eyes : and many a curious elf,
Among her kindred, wonder'd that such dower
Of youth and beauty should be thrown aside
By one mark'd out to be a Noble's bride.

LVIII

And, furthermore, her brethren wondered much
Why she sat drooping by the Basil green,
And why it flourish'd, as by magic touch ;
Greatly they wonder'd what the thing might mean :
They could not surely give belief, that such
A very nothing would have power to wean
Her from her own fair youth, and pleasures gay,
And even remembrance of her love's delay.

LIX

Therefore they watch'd a time when they might sift
This hidden whim ; and long they watch'd in vain ;
For seldom did she go to chapel-shrift,
And seldom felt she any hunger-pain ;
And when she left, she hurried back, as swift
As bird on wing to breast its eggs again ;
And, patient as a hen-bird, sat her there
Beside her Basil, weeping through her hair.

LX

Yet they contriv'd to steal the Basil-pot,
And to examine it in secret place ;
The thing was vile with green and livid spot,
And yet they knew it was Lorenzo's face :
The guerdon of their murder they had got,
And so left Florence in a moment's space,
Never to turn again.—Away they went,
With blood upon their heads, to banishment.

272 ISABELLA, OR, THE POT OF BASIL

LXI

O Melancholy, turn thine eyes away !
O Music, Music, breathe despondingly !
(O Echo, Echo, on some other day,
From isles Lethean, sigh to us—O sigh !
Spirits of grief, sing not your ' Well-a-way ' !
For Isabel, sweet Isabel, will die ;
Will die a death too lone and incomplete,
Now they have ta'en away her Basil sweet.

LXII

Piteous she look'd on dead and senseless things,
Asking for her lost Basil amorously ;
And with melodious chuckle in the strings
Of her lorn voice, she oftentimes would cry
After the Pilgrim in his wanderings,
To ask him where her Basil was ; and why
'Twas hid from her ' For cruel 'tis,' said she,
' To steal my Basil-pot away from me.'

LXIII

And so she pined, and so she died forlorn,
Imploring for her Basil to the last.
No heart was there in Florence but did mourn
In pity of her love, so overcast.
And a sad ditty of this story born
From mouth to mouth through all the country pass'd :
Still is the burthen sung—' O cruelty,
' To steal my Basil-pot away from me !'

THE EVE OF ST AGNES

I

ST AGNES' EVE—Ah, bitter chill it was !
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold ;
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen-grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold .
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from the censer old,
Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he
saith.

II

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man ;
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow-degrees :
The sculptur'd dead, on each side, seem to freeze,
Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails :
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by : and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

III

Northward he turneth through a little door,
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue
Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor ;
But no—already had his death-bell rung ,
The joys of all his life were said and sung :
His was harsh penance on St Agnes' Eve :
Another way he went, and soon among
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

IV

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft ;
 And so it chanc'd, for many a door was wide,
 From hurry to and fro Soon, up aloft,
 The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide :
 The level chambers, ready with their pride,
 Were glowing to receive a thousand guests :
 The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,
 Star'd, where upon their heads the cornice rests,
 With hair blown back, and wings put crosswise on
 their breasts.

V

At length burst in the argent revelry,
 With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
 Numerous as shadows haunting fairy
 The brain, new stuff'd in youth, with triumphs
 gay
 Of old romance These let us wish away,
 And turn, sole thoughted, to one Lady there,
 Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
 On love, and wing'd St Agnes' saintly care,
 As she had heard old dames full many times declare

VI

They told her how, upon St Agnes' Eve,
 Young virgins might have visions of delight,
 And soft adorings from their loves receive
 Upon the honey'd middle of the night,
 If ceremonies due they did aright .
 As, supperless to bed they must retire,
 And couch supine their beauties, lily white ;
 Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
 Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they
 desire.

VII

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline :
The music, yearning like a God in pain,
She scarcely heard : her maiden eyes divine
Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
Pass by—she heeded not at all : in vain
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
And back retir'd ; not cool'd by high disdain,
But she saw not : her heart was elsewhere :
She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

VIII

She danc'd along with vague, regardless eyes,
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short :
The hallow'd hour was near at hand . she sighs
Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort
Of whispers in anger, or in sport ;
'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
Hoodwink'd with faery fancy . all amort,
Save to St Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

IX

So, purposing each moment to retire,
She linger'd still. Meantime, across the moors,
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores
All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
But for one moment in the tedious hours,
That he might gaze and worship all unseen ;
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth, such
things have been

X

He ventures in : let no buzz'd whisper tell :
 All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
 Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel :
 For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes
 Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
 Whose very dogs would execrations howl
 Against his lineage . not one breast affords
 Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
 Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

XI

Ah, happy chance ! the aged creature came,
 Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
 To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
 Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
 The sound of merriment and chorus bland .
 He startled her ; but soon she knew his face,
 And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand,
 Saying, ' Mercy, Porphyro ! hie thee from this place ;
 They are all here to-night, the whole bloodthirsty race !

XII

' Get hence ! get hence ! there's dwarfish Hildebran
 He had a fever late, and in the fit
 He cursed thee and thine, both house and land .
 Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
 More tame for his gray hairs—Alas me ! flit !
 Flit like a ghost away.'—' Ah, Gossip dear,
 We're safe enough ; here in this arm-chair sit,
 And tell me how——' ' Good Saints ! not here, not
 here ;
 Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier !

XIII

He follow'd through a lowly arched way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume ;
And as she muttered, ' Well-a—well-a-day !'
He found him in a little moonlight room,
Pale, lattic'd, chill, and silent as a tomb.
' Now tell me where is Madeline,' said he,
' O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
When they St Agnes' wool are weaving piously.'

XIV

' St Agnes ! Ah ! it is St Agnes' Eve—
Yet men will murder upon holy days :
Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,
To venture so : it fills me with amaze
To see thee, Porphyro !—St Agnes' Eve !
God's help, my lady fair the conjurer plays
This very night : good angels her deceive !
But let me laugh awhile, I've muckle time to grieve.'

XV

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
Who keepeth clos'd a wondrous riddle-book,
As spectacl'd she sits in chimney-nook.
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
His lady's purpose ; and he scarce could brook
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments
cold,
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old

XVI

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart
Made purple riot. then doth he propose
A stratagem, that makes the beldame start :
' A cruel man and impious thou art :
Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream
Alone with her good angels, far apart
From wicked men like thee. Go, go !—I deem
Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem.

XVII

' I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,'
Quoth Porphyro ' O may I ne'er find grace
When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
Or look with ruffian passion in her face :
Good Angela, believe me by these tears ;
Or I will, even in a moment's space,
Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
And beard them, though they be more fang'd than
wolves and bears.'

XVIII

' Ah ! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul ?
A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing,
Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll ;
Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
Were never miss'd.'—Thus planning, doth she bring
A gentler speech from burning Porphyro ;
So woeful, and of such deep sorrowing,
That Angela gives promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

XIX

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
Him in a closet, of such privacy
That he might see her beauty unespied,
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
While legion'd fairies pac'd the coverlet,
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
Never on such a night have lovers met,
Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

XX.

'It shall be as thou wishest,' said the Dame:
'All cates and dainties shall be stored there
Quickly on this feast-night. by the tambour-frame
Her own lute thou wilt see no time to spare,
For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer
The while. Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,
Or may I never leave my grave among the dead.'

XXI

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear
The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd,
The dame return'd, and whisper'd in his ear
To follow her, with aged eyes aghast
From fright of dim espial Safe at last,
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd and chaste;
Where Porphyro took covert, pleas'd amain
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her
brain.

XXII

Her faltering hand upon the balustrade.
 Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
 When Madeline, St Agnes' charmed maid,
 Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware
 With silver taper's light, and pious care,
 She turn'd, and down the aged gossip led
 To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
 Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed ;
 She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove fray'd
 and fled.

XXIII

Out went the taper as she hurried in ;
 Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died :
 She clos'd the door, she panted, all akin
 To spirits of the air, and visions wide :
 No utter'd syllable, or woe betide !
 But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
 Panting with eloquence her balmy side ;
 As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
 Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stuffed, in her dell

XXIV

A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,
 All garlanded with carven imag'ries
 Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
 And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
 Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
 As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings ;
 And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
 And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
 A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens
 and kings

XXV

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon ;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint :
She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
Save wings, for heaven :—Porphyro grew faint :
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

XXVI

Anon his heart revives ; her vespers done,
Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees ;
Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one ;
Loosens her fragrant bodice ; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees :
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in seaweed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair St Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

XXVII

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,
Until the poppi'd warmth of sleep oppress'd
Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away ;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day ;
Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain ;
Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray ;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

XXVIII

Stolen to this paradise, and so entranc'd,
Porphyro gaz'd upon her empty dress,
And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanc'd
To wake into a slumberous tenderness,
Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
And breath'd himself: then from the closet crept,
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
And over the hush'd carpet silent, stept,
And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo!—how fast
she slept.

XXIX

Then by the bedside, where the faded moon
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
A table, and half anguish'd, threw thereon
A cloth of woven crimson, gold and jet:—
O for some drowsy Morpheap amulet!
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
The keetledrum, and far-heard clarionet,
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone:—
The hall-door shuts again, and all the noise is gone

XXX

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanch'd linen, smooth, and lavender'd,
While he forth from the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd,
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon.
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon

XXXI

These delicacies he heap'd with glowing hand
 On golden dishes and in baskets bright
 Of wreathed silver : sumptuous they stand
 In the retired quiet of the night,
 Filling the chilly room with perfume light.—
 ' And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake !
 Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite :
 Open thine eyes, for meek St Agnes' sake,
 Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache.'

XXXII

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved arm
 Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
 By the dusk curtains :—'Twas a midnight charm
 Impossible to melt as iced stream :
 The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam ;
 Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies :
 It seem'd he never, never could redeem
 From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes ;
 So mus'd awhile, entoil'd in woofed phantasies.

XXXIII

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute—
 Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be,
 He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute,
 In Provence call'd, ' La belle dame sans merci' :
 Close to her ear touching the melody ;—
 Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft moan :
 He ceas'd—she panted quick—and suddenly
 Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone :
 Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptur'd
 stone

XXXIV

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
 Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep :
 There was a painful change, that nigh expell'd
 The blisses of her dream so pure and deep ;
 At which fair Madeline began to weep,
 And moan forth witless words with many a sigh ;
 While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep ;
 Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye,
 Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly

XXXV

' Ah, Porphyro ! ' said she, ' but even now
 Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
 Made tunable with every sweetest vow ;
 And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear :
 How chang'd thou art, how pallid, chill, and
 drear !
 - Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
 Those looks immortal, those complainings dear !
 Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
 For if thou diest, my love, I know not where to go.'

XXXVI

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far
 At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
 Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star
 Seen 'mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose ;
 Into her dream he melted, as the rose
 Blendeth its odour with the violet,—
 Solution sweet : meantime the frost-wind blows
 Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
 Against the window-panes ; St Agnes' moon hath set.

XXXVI

'Tis dark quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet :
'This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline !'
'Tis dark ; the iced gusts still rave and beat :
'No dream, alas ! alas ! and woe is mine !
Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.—
Cruel ! what traitor could thee hither bring ?
I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
Though thou forsakest a deceived thing ;—
A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing.'

XXXVIII

'My Madeline ! sweet dreamer ! lovely bride !
Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest ?
Thy beauty's shield, heart-shap'd and vermeil
dyed ?
Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
After so many hours of toil and quest,
A famish'd pilgrim,—saved by miracle.
Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest
Saving of thy sweet self ; if thou think'st well-
To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

XXXIX

'Hark ! 'tis an elfin-storm from faery land ;
Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed :
Arise—arise ! the morning is at hand ;—
The bloated wassailers will never heed .—
Let us away, my love, with happy speed ;
There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—
Drown all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead :
Awake ! arise ! my love, and fearless be,
For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee.'

XL

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
 For there were sleeping dragons all around,
 At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears—
 Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found.—
 In all the house was heard no human sound
 A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by each door ;
 The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,
 Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar ;
 And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

XLI

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall ;
 Like phantoms, to the iron porch, they glide ;
 Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
 With a huge empty flagon by his side :
 The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his
 hide,
 But his sagacious eye an inmate owns
 By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide :—
 The chains lie silent on the footworn stones,—
 A key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

XLII

And they are gone ay, ages long ago
 These lovers fled away into the storm
 That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
 And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
 Of witch, and demon, and large coffin worm,
 Were long be-nightmar'd Angela the old
 Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face deform ;
 The Beadsman, after thousand Aves told,
 For aye unsought-for slept amongst his ashes cold."

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

I

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk :
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy, in thine happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

II

O for a draught of vintage ! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth !
O for a beaker full of the warm south,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple stained mouth ,
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim :

III

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan ,

Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
 Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies ;
 Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
 And leaden-eyed despairs,
 Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
 Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

IV

Away ! away ! for I will fly to thee,
 Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
 But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
 Though the dull brain perplexes and retards :
 Already with thee ! tender is the night,
 And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
 Cluster'd round by all her starry Fays ,
But here there is no light,
 Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
 Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy
 ways.

V

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
 Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
 But, in the embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
 Wherewith the seasonable month endows
 The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild ,
 White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine ;
 Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves ;
 And mid-May's eldest child,
 The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
 The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

VI

Darkling I listen ; and, for many a time
 I have been half in love with easeful Death,
 Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
 To take into the air my quiet breath ,

Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
 To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
 While thou art pouring thy soul abroad
 In such an ecstasy!
 Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain
 To thy high requiem become a sod.

VII

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
 No hungry generation tread thee down;
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard
 In ancient days by emperor and clown
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for
 home,
 She stood in tears among the alien corn;
 The same that oft-times hath
 Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
 Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

VIII

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
 To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
 Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
 As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
 Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
 Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
 Up the hill-side, and now 'tis buried deep
 In the next valley glades
 Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
 Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

I

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens
loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

II

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone.
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor even can those trees be bare;
Bold lover, never, never canst thou kiss
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

III

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,

For ever panting, and for ever young ;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

IV

Who are these coming to the sacrifice ?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest ?
What little town by river or seashore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn ?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be, and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

V

O Attic shape ! Fair attitude ! with bide
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed,
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity : Cold Pastoral !
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,'—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know

ODE TO PSYCHE

O GODDESS I hear these tuneless numbers, wrung
By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,
And pardon that thy secrets should be sung,
Even into thine own soft-conched ear.
Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see
The winged Psyche with awaken'd eyes?
I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly,
And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,
Saw two fair creatures, couched side by side
In deepest grass, beneath the whispering roof
Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran
A brooklet, scarce espied
'Mid hush'd, cool-rooted flowers, fragrant-eyed,
Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,
They lay calm-breathing on the bedded grass,
Their arms embrac'd, and their pinions too;
Their lips touch'd not, but had not bade adieu,
As if disjoined by soft-handed slumber,
And ready still past kisses to outnumber
At tender eye-dawn of aurorean love:
The winged boy I knew,
But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove?
His Psyche true!

O latest born and loveliest vision far
Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy!
Fairer than Phoebe's sapphire-region'd star,
Or Vesper, armorous glow-worm of the sky;
Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,
Nor altar heap'd with flowers,
Nor virgin-choir to make delicious moan
Upon the midnight hours,

No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet
 From chain-swung censer teeming ;
 No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat
 Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming

O brightest ! though too late for antique vows,
 Too, too late for the fond believing ly'e,
 When holy were the haunted forest boughs,
 Holy the air, the water, and the fire ;
 Yet even in these days so far retir'd
 From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,
 Fluttering among the faint Olympians,

I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspir'd
 So let me be thy choir, and make a moan
 Upon the midnight hours ;
 Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet
 From swung censer teeming ;
 Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat
 Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
 In some untrodden region of my mind,
 Where branched thoughts, new-grown with pleasant
 pain,

Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind :
 Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees
 Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep ;
 And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,
 The moss-lain Dryads shall be lull'd to sleep,
 And in the midst of this wide quietness
 A rosy sanctuary will I dress

With the wreath'd trellis of a working brain,
 With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,
 With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,
 Who breeding flowers, will never breed the same :
 And there shall be for thee all-soft delight
 That shadowy thought can win,
 A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
 To let the warm Love in !

FANCY

EVER let the fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home :
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth ;
Then let winged Fancy wander
Through the thought still spread beyond her :
Open wide the mind's cage-door,
She'll dart forth, and cloudward soar.
O sweet Fancy ! let her loose ,
Summer's joys are spoilt by use,
And the enjoying of the Spring
Fades as does its blossoming ,
Autumn's red-lipp'd fruitage too,
Blushing through the mist and dew,
Cloy's with tasting What do then ?
Sit thee by the ingle, when
The sear laggot blazes bright,
Spirit of a winter's night ;
When the soundless earth is muffled,
And the caked snow is shuffled
From the ploughboy's heavy shoon ;
When the Night doth meet the Noon
In a dark conspiracy
To banish Even from her sky.
Sit thee there, and send abroad,
With a mind self-overawed,
Fancy, high-commission'd .—send her !
She has vassals to attend her .
She will bring, in spite of frost,
Beauties that the earth hath lost ;
She will bring thee, all together,
All delights of summer weather ;

All the buds and bells of May,
From dewy sward or thorny spray ;
All the heaped Autumn's wealth,
With a still, mysterious stealth .
She will mix these pleasures up
Like three fit wines in a cup,
And thou shalt quaff it —thou shalt hear
Distant harvest-carols clear ;
Rustle of the reaped corn ;
Sweet birds antheming the morn :
And, in the same moment—hark !
'Tis the early April lark,
Or the rooks, with busy caw,
Foraging for sticks and straw
Thou shalt, at one glance, behold
The daisy and the marigold ,
White-plumed lilies, and the first
Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst ;
Shaded hyacinth, alway
Sapphire queen of the mid-May ;
And every leaf, and every flower
Pearl'd with the self-same shower.
Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep
Meagre from its celled sleep ;
And the snake all winter-thin
Cast on sunny bank its skin ,
Freckled nest-eggs thou shalt see
Hatching in the hawthorn-tree,
When the hen-bird's wing doth rest
Quiet on her mossy nest ;
Then the hurry and alarm
When the bee-hive casts its swarin ;
Acorns ripe down-pattering,
While the autumn breezes sing

Oh, sweet Fancy ! let her loose ;
Every thing is spoilt by use .
Where's the cheek that doth not fade,
Too much gazed at ? Where's the maid

Whose lip mature is ever new?
Where's the eye, however blue,
Doth not weary? Where's the face
One would meet in every-place?
Where's the voice, however soft,
One would hear so very oft?
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.
Let, then, winged Fancy find
Thee a mistress to thy mind
Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter,
Ere the God of Torment taught her
How to frown and how to chide;
With a waist and with a side
White as Hebe's, when her zone
Slipp'd its golden clasp, and down
Fell her kirtle to her feet,
While she held the goblet sweet,
And Jove grew languid.—Break the mesh
Of the Fancy's silken leash,
Quickly break her prison-string,
And such joys as these she'll bring.—
Let the winged Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home.

- ODE

BARDS of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth !
Have ye souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new ?
Yes, and those of heaven commune
With the spheres of sun and moon ;
With the noise of fountains wondrous,
And the parle of voices thund'rous ;
With the whisper of heaven's trees
And one another, in soft ease
Seated on Elysian lawns
Brows'd by none but Dian's fawns ;
Underneath large bluebells tented,
Where the daisies are rose-scented,
And the rose herself has got
Perfume which on earth is not ;
Where the nightingale doth sing
Not a senseless, tranced thing,
But divine melodious truth ;
Philosophic numbers smooth ;
Tales and golden histories
Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then
On the earth ye live again ;
And the souls ye left behind you
Teach us, here, the way to find you,
Where your other souls are joying,
Never slumber'd, never cloying.
Here, your earth-born souls still speak
To mortals, of their little week ;
Of their sorrows and delights,
Of their passions and their spites ;

Of their glory and their shame ;
What doth strengthen and what main.
Thus ye teach us, every day,
Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth !
Ye have souls in heaven too,
Double-fired in regions new :

LINES ON THE MERMAID TAVERN

Souls of poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?
Have ye tippled drink more fine
Than mine host's Canary wine?
Or are fruits of Paradise
Sweeter than those dainty pies
Of venison? O generous food!
Drest as though bold Robin Hood
Would, with his maid Marian,
Sup and bowse from horn and can.

I have heard that on a day
Mine host's signboard flew away,
Nobody knew whither, till
An astrologer's old quill
To a sheepskin gave the story,—
Said he saw you in your glory,—
Underneath a new old sign
Sipping beverage divine,
And pledging with contented mack
The Mermaid in the Zodiac

~ Souls of poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?

ROBIN HOOD

TO A FRIEND

No! those days are gone away,
And their hours are old and gray,
And their minutes buried all
Under the down-trodden pall
Of the leaves of many years :
Many times have Winter's shears,
Frozen North, and chilling East,
Sounded tempests to the feast
Of the forest's whispering fleeces,
Since men knew nor rent nor leases.

No, the bugle sounds no more,
And the twanging bow no more ;
Silent is the ivory shrill
Past the heath and up the hill ;
There is no mid-forest laugh,
Where lone Echo gives the half
To some wight, amaz'd to hear
Jesting, deep in forest drear

On the fairest time of June
You may go, with sun or moon,
Or the seven stars to light you,
Or the polar ray to right you ;
But you never may behold
Little John, or Robin bold ;
Never one, of all the clan,
Thrumming on an empty can

Some old hunting ditty, while
He doth his green way beguile
To fair hostess Merriment,
Down beside the pasture Trent;
For he left the merry tale
Messenger for spicy ale

Gone, the merry morris din;
Gone, the song of Gamelyn;
Gone, the tough-belted outlaw
Idling in the 'grené shawe';
All are gone away and past!
And if Robin should be cast
Sudden from his turfed grave,
And if Marian should have
Once again her forest days,
She would weep, and he would craze:
He would swear, for all his oaks,
Fall'n beneath the dockyard strokes,
Have rotted on the briny seas;
She would weep that her wild bees
Sang not to her—strange! that honey
Can't be got without hard money!

So it is; yet let us sing,
Honour to the old bow-string!
Honour to the bugle-horn!
Honour to the woods unshorn!
Honour to the Lincoln green!
Honour to the archer keen!
Honour to tight Little John,
And the horse he rode upon!
Honour to bold Robin Hood,
Sleeping in the underwood!
Honour to maid Marian,
And to all the Sherwood clan!
Though their days have hurried by
Let us two a burden try

TO AUTUMN

I

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness !
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun ;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run .
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core ,
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel ; to set budding more
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease ;
For Summer has o'erbrimm'd their clammy cells.

II

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store ?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft lifted by the winnowing wind ;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spare the next swath and all its twined flowers
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook ;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozyings, hours by hours.

III

Where are the songs of Spring ? Ay, where are they
Think not of them,—thou hast thy music too,
While barr'd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue ;

Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river-sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies,
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-cricket sing; and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

HYPERION

BOOK I

DEEP in the shady sadness of a vale
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
Sat gray-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone,
Still as the silence round about his lair;
Foiest on forest hung about his head
Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,
Not so much life as on a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest
A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more
By reason of his fallen divinity
Spreading a shade: the Naiad 'mid her reeds
Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large foot-marks went,
No further than to where his feet had stray'd,
And slept there since Upon the sodden ground
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
Unscathed; and his realmless eyes were closed;
While his bow'd head seem'd list'ning to the Earth,
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seem'd no force could wake him from his place;
But there came one, who with a kindred hand
Touch'd his wide-shoulders, after bending low
With reverence, though to one who knew it not.
She was a Goddess of the infant world;
By her in stature the tall Amazon
Had stood a pigmy's height. she would have ta'en

Achilles by the hair and bent his neck ;
 Or with a finger stay'd Ixion's wheel.
 Her face was large as that of Memphian sphinx,
 Pedestal'd haply in a palace court,
 When sages look'd to Egypt for their lore.
 But oh ! how unlike marble was that face :
 How beautiful, if sorrow had not made
 Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.
 There was a listening fear in her regard,
 As if calamity had but begun ;
 As if the vanward clouds of evil days
 Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
 Was with its stored thunder labouring up
 One hand she press'd upon that aching spot
 Where beats the human heart, as if just there,
 Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain .
 The other upon Saturn's bended neck
 She laid, and to the level of his ear
 Leaning with parted lips, some words she spake
 In solemn tenour and deep organ tone .
 Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue
 Would come in these like accents , O how frail
 To that large utterance of the early Gods !
 ' Saturn, look up ! — though wherefore, poor old
 King ?
 ' I have no comfort for thee, no not one :
 ' I cannot say, " O wherefore sleepest thou ? "
 ' For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth
 ' Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a God ,
 ' And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,
 ' Has from thy sceptre pass'd , and all the air
 ' Is emptied of thine hoary majesty
 ' Thy thunder, conscious of the new command,
 ' Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house ;
 ' And thy sharp lightning in unpractised hands
 ' Scorches and burns our once serene domain.
 ' O aching time ! O moments big as years !
 ' All as ye pass swell out the monstrous truth,

' And press it so upon our weary griefs
' That unbelief has not a space to breathe
' Saturn, sleep on —O thoughtless, why did I
' Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude?
' Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes?
' Saturn, sleep on ' while at thy feet I weep.'

As when, upon a tranced summer-night,
Those green-rob'd senators of mighty woods,
Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,
Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,
Save from one gradual solitary gust
Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,
As if the ebbing air had but one wave
So came these words and went; the while in tears
She touch'd her fair large forehead to the ground,
Just where her falling hair might be outspread
A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.
One moon, with alteration slow, had shed
Her silver seasons four upon the night,
And still these two were postured motionless,
Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern,
The frozen God still couchant on the earth,
And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet:
Until at length old Saturn lifted up
His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom gone,
And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,
And that fair kneeling Goddess; and then spake,
As with a palsied tongue, and while his beard
Shook horrid with such aspen-malady:
' O tender spouse of gold Hyperion,
' Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face,
' Look up, and let me see our doom in it;
' Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape
' Is Saturn's; tell me, if thou hear'st the voice
' Of Saturn; tell me, if this wrinkling brow,
' Naked and bare of its great diadem,
' Peers like the front of Saturn. Who had power



FANCY

'She will bring, in spite of frost,
Beauties that the earth hath lost'

'To make me desolate? whence came the strength?
'How was it nurtur'd to such bursting forth,
'While Fate seem'd strangled in my nervous grasp?
'But it is so; and I am smother'd up,
'And buried from all godlike exercise
'Of influence benign on planets pale,
'Of admonitions to the winds and seas,
'Of peaceful sway above man's harvesting,
'And all those acts which Deity supreme
'Doth ease its heart of love in.—I am gone
'Away from my own bosom: I have left
'My strong identity, my real self,
'Somewhere between the throne, and where I sit
'Here on this spot of earth. Search, Thea, search!
'Open thine eyes eterne, and sphere them round
'Upon all space: space starr'd, and lorn of light;
'Space region'd with life-air, and barren void;
'Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of hell.—
'Search, Thea, search! and tell me if thou seest
'A certain shape or shadow, making way
'With wings or chariot fierce to repossess
'A heaven he lost erewhile: it must—it must
'Be of ripe progress—Saturn must be King.
'Yes, there must be a golden victory;
'There must be Gods thrown down, and trumpets
blown
'Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival
'Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,
'Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir
'Of strings in hollow shells, and there shall be
'Beautiful things made new, for the surprise
'Of the sky-children; I will give command:
'Thea! Thea! Thea! where is Saturn?'

This passion lifted him upon his feet,
And made his hands to struggle in the air,
His Druid locks to shake and ooze with sweat,
His eyes to fever out, his voice to cease

But horrors, portion'd to a giant nerve,
Oft made Hyperion ache. His palace bright
Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold,
And touch'd with shade of bronzéd obelisks,
Glared a blood-red through all its thousand courts,
Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries,
And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds
Flush'd angrily : while sometimes eagle's wings,
Unseen before by Gods or wondering men,
Darken'd the place ; and neighing steeds were heard,
Not heard before by Gods or wondering men.
Also, when he would taste the spicy wreaths
Of incense, breath'd aloft from sacred hills,
Instead of sweets, his ample palate took
Savour of poisonous brass and metal sick :
And so, when harbour'd in the sleepy west,
After the full completion of fair day,—
For rest divine upon exalted couch
And slumber in the arms of melody,
He paced away the pleasant hours of ease
With stride colossal, on from hall to hall ;
While far within each aisle and deep recess,
His winged minions in close clusters stood,
Amazed and full of fear ; like anxious men
Who on wide plains gather in panting troops,
When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers.
Even now, while Saturn, rous'd from icy trance,
Went step for step with Thea through the woods,
Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,
Came slope upon the threshold of the west ;
Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew ope
In smoothest silence, save what solemn tubes,
Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of sweet
And wandering sounds, slow-breathed melodies ;
And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape,
In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye,
That inlet to severe magnificence
Stood full blown, for the God to enter in.

He enter'd, but he enter'd full of wrath,
 His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,
 And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,
 That scar'd away the meek ethereal Hours
 And made their dove-wings tremble On he flared,
 From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,
 Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light,
 And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades,
 Until he reach'd the great main cupola,
 There standing fierce beneath, he stamp'd his foot,
 And from the basements deep to the high towers.
 Jarr'd his own golden region, and before
 The quavering thunder thereupon had ceased,
 His voice leapt out, despite of godlike curb,
 To this result 'O dreams of day and night',
 'O monstrous forms! O effigies of pain!
 'O spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom!
 'O lank-ear'd Phantoms of black-weeded pools!
 'Why do I know ye? why have I seen ye? why
 'Is my eternal essence thus distraught
 'To see and to behold these horrors new?
 'Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall?
 'Am I to leave this haven of my rest,
 'This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,
 'This calm luxuriance of blissful light.
 'These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes,
 'Of all my lucent empire? It is left
 'Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine.
 -- 'The blaze, the splendour, and the symmetry,
 'I cannot see—but darkness, death and darkness.
 'Even here, into my centre of repose,
 'The shady visions come to domineer,
 'Insult, and blind, and stifle up my pomp.—
 'Fall!—No, by Tellus and her briny robes!
 'Over the fiery frontier of my realms
 'I will advance a terrible right arm
 'Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel Jove,
 'And bid old Saturn take his throne again!—

He spake, and ceas'd, the while a heavier threat
Held struggle with his throat but came not forth ;
For as in theatres of crowded men
Hubbub increases more they call out ' Hush !'
So at Hyperion's words the Phantoms' pale
Bestirr'd themselves, thrice horrible and cold ;
And from the mirror'd level where he stood
A mist arose, as from a scummy marsh
At this, though all his bulk an agony
Crept gradual, from the feet unto the crown,
Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular
Making slow way, with head and neck convulsed
From over-strained might Released, he fled
To the eastern gates, and full six dewy hours
Before the dawn in season due should blush,
He breathed fierce breath against the sleepy portals,
Clear'd them of heavy vapours, burst them wide
Suddenly on the ocean's chilly streams.
The planet orb of fire, whereon he rode
Each day from east to west the heavens through.
Spun round in sable curtaining of clouds,
Not therefore veiled quite, blindfold, and hid,
But ever and anon the glancing spheres,
Circles, and arcs, and broad-belting colure,
Glow'd through, and wrought upon the muffling-dark
Sweet-shaped lightnings from the nadir deep
Up to the zenith,—hieroglyphics old
Which sages and keen-eyed astrologers
Then living on the earth, with labouring thought
Won from the gaze of many centuries
Now lost, save what we find on remnants huge
Of stone, or marble swart, their import gone,
Their wisdom long since fled Two wings this orb
Possess'd for glory, two fair argent wings,
Ever exalted at the God's approach
And now, from forth the gloom their plumes immense
Rose, one by one, till all outspread were ;
While still the dazzling globe maintain'd eclipse,

Awaiting for Hyperion's command
 Fain would he have commanded, fain took throne,
 And bid the day begin, if but for change
 He might not. — No, though a primeval God :
 The sacred seasons might not be disturb'd.
 Therefore the operations of the dawn
 Stay'd in their birth, even as here 'tis told.
 Those silver wings expanded sisterly,
 Eager to sail their orb, the porches wide
 Open'd upon the dusk demesnes of night,
 And the bright Titan, frenzied with new woes,
 Unused to bend, by hard compulsion bent
 His spirit to the sorrow of the time ;
 And all along a dismal rack of clouds,
 Upon the boundaries of day and night,
 He stretch'd himself in grief and radiance faint.
 There as he lay, the Heaven with its stars
 Look'd down on him with pity, and the voice
 Of Coelus, from the universal space,
 Thus whisper'd low and solemn in his ear
 ' O brightest of my children dear, earth-born
 ' And sky-engendered. Son of Mysteries '
 ' All unrevealed even to the powers
 ' Which met at thy creating ' at whose joys
 ' And palpitations sweet, and pleasures soft,
 ' I, Coelus, wonder, how they came and whence ;
 ' And at the fruits thereof what shapes they be,
 ' Distinct, and visible, symbols divine,
 ' Manifestations of that beauteous life
 ' Diffused unseen throughout eternal space,
 ' Of these new-form'd art thou, oh brightest child !
 ' Of these, thy brethren and the Goddesses '
 ' There is sad feud among ye, and rebellion
 ' Of son against his sire. I saw him fall,
 ' I saw my first-born tumbled from his throne !
 ' To me his arms were spread, to me his voice
 ' Found way from forth the thunders round his head !
 ' Pale wax I, and in vapours hid my face

' Art thou, too, near such doom? vague fear there is :
' For I have seen my sons most unlike Gods.
' Divine ye were created, and divine
' In sad demeanour, solemn, undisturb'd,
' Unruffled, like high Gods, ye lived and ruled :
' Now I behold in you fear, hope, and wrath ;
' Actions of rage and passion ; even as
' I see them, on the mortal world beneath,
' In men who die.—This is the grief, O Son !
' Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay, and fall !
' Yet do thou strive ; as thou art capable,
' As thou canst move about, an evident God ;
' And canst oppose to each malignant hour
' Ethereal presence :—I am but a voice,
' My life is but the life of winds and tides,
' No more than winds and tides can I avail :—
' But thou canst —Be thou therefore in the van
' Of circumstance ; yea, seize the arrow's barb
' Before the tense string murmur.—To the earth
' For there thou wilt find Saturn, and his woes.
' Meantime I will keep watch on thy bright sun ;
' And of thy seasons be a careful nurse.'—
Ere half this region-whisper had come down,
Hyperion arose, and on the stars
Lifted his curv'd lids, and kept them wide
Until it ceas'd ; and still he kept them wide :
And still they were the same bright, patient stars
Then with a slow incline of his broad breast,
Like to a diver in the pearly seas,
Forward he stoop'd over the airy shore,
And plunged all noiseless into the deep night.

BOOK II

JUST at the self-same beat of Time's wide wings
Hyperion slid into the rustled air,
And Saturn gain'd with Thea that sad place
Where Cybele and the bruised Titans mourn'd.
It was a den where no insulting light
Could glimmer on their tears; where their own
groans

They felt, but heard not, for the solid roar
Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents hoarse,
Pouring a constant bulk, uncertain where
Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks that seem'd
Ever as if just rising from a sleep,
Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns;
And thus in thousand hugest phantasies
Made a fit roofing to this nest of woe
Instead of thrones, hard flint they sat upon,
Couches of rugged stone, and slaty ridge
Stubborn'd with iron All were not assembled:
Some chain'd in torture, and some wandering
Cœus, and Gyges, and Briareus,
Typhon, and Dolor, and Porphyron,
With many more, the brawniest in assault,
Vere pent in regions of laborious breath,
Dungeon'd in opaque element, to keep
Their clenched teeth still clench'd, and all their limbs
Lock'd up like veins of metal, cramp't and screw'd;
Without a motion, save of their big hearts
Heaving in pain, and horribly convulsed
With sanguine feverous boiling gurge of pulse.
Mnemosyne was straying in the world,
Far from her moon had Phœbe wandered;
And many else were free to roam abroad,
But for the main, here found they covert drear.
Scarce images of life, one here, one there,
Lay vast and edgeways; like a dismal cirque

Of Druid stones, upon a forlorn moor,
When the chill rain begins at shut of eve,
In dull November, and their chancel vault,
The Heaven itself, is blinded throughout night.
Each one kept shroud, nor to his neighbour gave
Or word, or look, or action of despair.
Creus was one ; his ponderous iron mace
Lay by him, and a shatter'd rib of rock
Told of his rage, ere he thus sank and pined.
Iāpetus another ; in his grasp,
A serpent's plashy neck ; its barbed tongue
Squeez'd from the gorge, and all its uncurl'd length
Dead ; and because the creature could not spit
Its poison in the eyes of conquering Jove.
Next Cottus : prone he lay, chin uppermost,
As though in pain ; for still upon the flint
He ground severe his skull, with open mouth
And eyes at horrid working. Nearest him
Asia, born of most enormous Caf,
Who cost her mother Tellus keener pangs,
Though feminine, than any of her sons
More thought than woe was in her dusky face,
For she was prophesying of her glory ;
And in her wide imagination stood
Palm-shaded temples, and high rival fanes,
By Oxus or in Ganges' sacred isles.
Even as Hope upon her anchor leans,
So leant she, not so fair, upon a tusk
Shed from the broadest of her elephants.
Above her, on a crag's uneasy shelf,
Upon his elbow rais'd, all prostrate else,
Shadow'd Enceladus, once tame and mild
As grazing ox unworried in the meads ;
Now tiger-passion'd, lion-thoughted, wroth,
He meditated, plotted, and even now
Was hurling mountains in that second war,
Not long delay'd, that scared the younger Gods
To hide themselves in forms of beast and bird

Not far hence Atlas ; and beside him prone
Phorcus, the sire of Gorgons Neighbour'd close
Oceanus, and Tethys, in whose lap
Sobb'd Clymene among her tangled hair.
In midst of all lay Themis, at the feet
Of Ops the queen all clouded round from sight ;
No shape distinguishable, more than when
Thick night confounds the pine-tops with the clouds :
And many else whose names may not be told
For when the Muse's wings are air-ward spread,
Who shall delay her flight ? And she must chant
Of Saturn, and his guide, who now had climb'd
With damp and slippery footing from a depth
More horrid still. Above a sombre cliff
Their heads appear'd, and up their stature grew
Till on the level height their steps found ease
Then Thea spread abroad her trembling arms
Upon the precincts of this nest of pain,
And sidelong fix'd her eye on Saturn's face .
There saw she direst strife ; the supreme God
At war with all the frailty of grief,
Of rage, of fear, anxiety, revenge,
Remorse, spleen, hope, but most of all despair.
Against these plagues he strove in vain , for Fate
Had pour'd a mortal oil upon his head,
A disanointing poison . so that Thea,
Affrighted, kept her still, and let him pass
First onwards in, among the fallen tribe

As with us mortal men, the laden heart
Is persecuted more, and fever'd more,
When it is nighing to the mournful house
Where other hearts are sick of the same bruise ;
So Saturn, as he walk'd into the midst,
Felt faint, and would have sunk among the rest,
But that he met Enceladus's eye,
Whose mightiness, and awe of him, at once
Came like an inspiration , and he shouted,

'Titans, behold your God!' at which some groan'd;
Some started on their feet; some also shouted;
Some wept, some wail'd, all bow'd with reverence;
And Ops, uplifting her black folded-veil,
Show'd her pale cheeks, and all her forehead wan,
Her eyebrows thin and jet, and hollow eyes
There is a roaring in the bleak-grown pines
When Winter lifts his voice, there is a noise
Among immortals when a God gives sign,
With hushing finger, how he means to load
His tongue with the full weight of utterless thought,
With thunder, and with music, and with pomp:
Such noise is like the roar of bleak-grown pines;
Which, when it ceases in this mountain'd world,
No other sound succeeds, but ceasing here,
Among these fallen, Saturn's voice therefrom
Grew up like organ, that begins anew
Its strain, when other harmonies, stopt short,
Leave the dinn'd air vibrating silverly.
Thus grew it up—'Not in my own sad breast,
'Which is its own great judge and searcher out,
'Can I find reason why ye should be thus:
'Not in the legends of the first of days,
'Studied from that old spirit-leaved book
'Which starry Uranus with finger bright
'Saved from the shores of darkness, when the waves
'Low-ebb'd still hid it up in shallow gloom;—
'And the which book ye know I ever kept
'For my firm-based footstool:—Ah, infirm!
'Not there, nor in sign, symbol, or portent
'Of element, earth, water, air, and fire,—
'At war, at peace, or inter-quarrelling
'One against one, or two, or three, or all
'Each several one against the other three,
'As fire with air loud warring when rain-floods
'Drown both, and press them both against earth's face
'Where, finding sulphur, a quadruple wrath
'Unhinges the poor world;—not in that strife,

' Wherefrom I take strange lore, and read it deep, '
 ' Can I find reason why ye should be thus :
 ' No, nowhere can unriddle, though I search, '
 ' And pore on Nature's universal scroll
 ' Even to swooning, why ye, Divinities,
 ' The first-born of all-shaped and palpable Gods
 ' Should cower beneath what, in comparison,
 ' Is untremendous might. Yet ye are here,
 ' O'erwhelm'd, and spun'd, and batter'd, ye are here !
 ' O Titans, shall I say, " Arise ! "—Ye groan
 ' Shall I say " Crouch ! "—Ye groan What can I
 then '
 ' O Heaven wide ! O unseen parent dear !
 ' What can I ? Tell me, all ye brethren Gods,
 ' How we can war, how engine our great wrath !
 ' O speak your counsel now, for Saturn's ear
 ' Is all a-hunger'd Thou, Oceanus,
 ' Ponderest high and deep ; and in thy face
 ' I see; astonished, that severe content
 ' Which comes of thought and musing give us help ! '

So ended Saturn ; and the God of the Sea,
 Sophist and sage, from no Athenian grove,
 But cogitation in his watery shades
 Arose, with locks not oozy, and began.
 In murmurs, which his first-endeavouring tongue
 Caught infant-like from the far-foamed sands
 ' O ye, whom wrath consumes ! who, passion-stung,
 ' Wrinthe at defeat, and nurse your agonies '
 ' Shut up your senses, stifle up your ears,
 ' My voice is not a bellows unto ire
 Yet listen, ye who will, whilst I bring proof
 ' How ye, perforce, must be content to stoop :
 ' And in the proof much comfort will I give,
 ' If ye will take that comfort in its truth
 ' We fall by course of Nature's law, not force
 ' Of thunder, or of Jove Great Saturn, thou
 ' Hast sifted well the atom-universe ,

' But for this reason, that thou art the King,
' And only blind from sheer supremacy,
' One avenue was shaded from thine eyes,
' Through which I wandered to eternal truth.
' And first, as thou wast not the first of powers,
' So art thou not the last ; it cannot be :
' Thou art not the beginning nor the end
' From chaos and parental darkness came
' Light, the first fruits of that intestine broil,
' That sullen ferment, which for wondrous ends
' Was ripening in itself. The ripe hour came,
' And with it light, and light, engendering
' Upon its own producer, forthwith touch'd
' The whole enormous matter into life.
' Upon that very hour, our parentage,
' The Heavens and the Earth, were manifest :
' Then thou first born, and we the giant race,
' Found ourselves ruling new and beauteous realms.
' Now comes the pain of truth, to whom 'tis pain ;
' O folly ! for to bear all naked truths,
' And to envisage circumstance, all calm,
' That is the top of sovereignty. Mark well !
' As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far
' Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once
chiefs ;
' And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth
' In form and shape compact and beautiful,
' In will, in action free, companionship.
' And thousand other signs of purer life ,
So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,
' A power more strong in beauty, born of us
' And fated to excel us, as we pass
' In glory that old Darkness : nor are we
' Thereby more conquer'd than by us the rule
' Of shapeless Chaos. Say, doth the dull soil
' Quarrel with the proud forests it hath fed,
' And feedeth still, more comely than itself ?
' Can it deny the chiefdom of green groves ?

' Or shall the tree be envious of the dove
 ' Because it cooeth, and hath snowy wings
 ' To wander wherewithal and find its joys?
 ' We are such forest-trees, and our fair boughs
 ' Have bred forth, not pale solitary doves,
 ' But eagles golden-feather'd, who do tower
 ' Above us in their beauty, and must reign
 ' In right thereof ; for 'tis the eternal law
 ' That first in beauty should be first in might :
 ' Yea, by that law, another race may drive
 ' Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.
 ' Have ye beheld the young God of the Seas,
 ' My-dispossessor? Have ye seen his face?
 ' Have ye beheld his chariot, foam'd along
 ' By noble winged creatures he hath made?
 ' I saw him on the calmed waters scud,
 ' With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,
 ' That it enforc'd me to bid sad farewell
 ' To all my empire : farewell sad I took,
 ' And hither came, to see how dolorous fate
 ' Had wrought upon ye ; and how I might best
 ' Give consolation in this woe extreme.
 ' Receive the truth, and let it be your balm.'

Whether through posed conviction, or disdain,
 They guarded silence, when Oceanus
 Left murmuring, what deepest thought can tell?
 But so it was, none answer'd for a space,
 Save one whom none regarded, Clymene ;
 And yet she answer'd not, only complain'd,
 With hectic lips, and eyes up-looking mild,
 Thus wording timidly among the fierce :
 ' O Father, I am here the simplest voice,
 ' And all my knowledge is that joy is gone,
 ' And this thing woe crept in among our hearts,
 ' There to remain for ever, as I fear.
 ' I would not bode of evil, if I thought
 ' So weak a creature could turn off the help

' Which by just right should come of mighty Gods ;
' Yet let me tell my sorrow, let me tell
' Of what I heard, and how it made me weep,
' And know that we had parted from all hope.
' I stood upon a shore, a pleasant shore,
' Where a sweet clime was breathed from a land
' Of fragrance, quietness, and trees, and flowers.
' Full of calm joy it was, as I of grief ;
' Too full of joy and soft delicious warmth ;
' So that I felt a movement in my heart
' To chide, and to reproach that solitude
' With songs of misery, music of our woes ;
' And sat me down, and took a mouthed shell
' And murmur'd into it, and made melody—
' O melody no more ! for while I sang,
' And with poor skill let pass into the breeze
' The dull shell's echo, from a bowery strand
' Just opposite, an island of the sea,
' There came enchantment with the shifting wind,
' That did both drown and keep alive my ears
' I threw my shell away upon the sand,
' And a wave fill'd it, as my sense was fill'd
' With that new blissful golden melody.
' A living death was in each gush of sounds,
' Each family of rapturous hurried notes,
' That fell, one after one, yet all at once,
' Like pearl beads dropping sudden from their string.
' And then another, then another strain,
' Each like a dove leaving its olive perch,
' With music wing'd instead of silent plumes,
' To hover round my head, and make me sick
' Of joy and grief at once. Grief overcame ;
' And I was stopping up my frantic ears,
' When, past all hindrance of my trembling hands,
' A voice came sweeter, sweeter than all tune,
' And still it cried, " Apollo ! young Apollo !
' " The morning-bright Apollo ! young Apollo ! "
' I fled, it follow'd me, and cried " Apollo ! "

'O Father, and O Brethren, had ye felt
'Those pains of mine ; O Saturn, hadst thou felt,
'Ye would not call this too indulged tongue
'Presumptuous, in thus venturing to be heard.'

So far her voice flow'd on, like timorous brook
That, lingering along a pebbled coast,
Doth fear to meet the sea : but sea it met,
And shudder'd ; for the overwhelming voice
Of huge Enceladus swallow'd it in wrath :
The ponderous syllables, like sullen waves
In the half-glutted hollows of reef-rocks,
Came booming thus, while still upon his arm
He lean'd ; not rising, from supreme contempt.
'Or shall we listen to the over-wise,
'Or to the over-foolish giant, Gods'
'Not thunderbolt on thunderbolt, till all
'That rebel Jove's whole armoury were spent,
'Not world on world upon these shoulders piled,
'Could agonise me more than baby-words
'In midst of this dethronement horrible
'Speak ! roar ! shout ! yell ! ye sleepy Titans all.
'Do ye forget the blows, the buffets vile
'Are ye not smitten by a youngling arm ?
'Dost thou forget, sham Monarch of the Waves,
'Thy scalding in the seas ? What ! have I roused
'Your spleens with so few simple words as these ?
'O joy ! for now I see ye are not lost.
'O joy ! for now I see a thousand eyes
'Wide glaring for revenge !'—As this he said,
He lifted up his stature vast, and stood,
Still without intermission speaking thus
'Now ye are flames, I'll tell you how to burn,
'And purge the ether of our enemies,
'How to feed fierce the crooked stings of fire,
'And singe away the swollen clouds of Jove,
'Stifling that puny essence in its tent.
'O let him feel the evil he hath done :

' For though I scorn Oceanus's lore,
 ' Much pain have I for more than loss of realms :
 ' The days of peace and slumberous calm are fled ;
 ' Those days, all innocent of scathing war,
 ' When all the fair Existences of heaven
 ' Came open-eyed to guess what we would speak :—
 ' That was before our brows were taught to frown,
 ' Before our lips knew else but solemn sounds ;
 ' That was before we knew the winged thing,
 ' Victory, might be lost, or might be won.
 ' And be ye mindful that Hyperion,
 ' Our brightest brother, still is undisgraced—
 ' Hyperion, lo ! his radiance is here ! '

All eyes were on Enceladus's face,
 And they beheld, while still Hyperion's name
 Flew from his lips up to the vaulted rocks,
 A pallid gleam across his features stern
 Not savage, for he saw full many a God
 Wroth as himself. He look'd upon them all,
 And in each face he saw a gleam of light,
 But splendor in Saturn's, whose hoar locks
 Shone like the bubbling foam about a keel
 When the prow sweeps into a midnight cove.
 In pale and silver silence they remain'd,
 Till suddenly a splendor, like the morn,
 Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steeps,
 All the sad spaces of oblivion,
 And every gulf, and every chasm old,
 And every height, and every sullen depth,
 Voiceless, or hoarse with loud tormented streams :
 And all the everlasting cataracts,
 And all the headlong torrents far and near,
 Mantled before in darkness and huge shade,
 Now saw the light and made it terrible
 It was Hyperion—a granite peak
 His bright feet touch'd, and there he stay'd to view
 The misery his brilliance had betray'd

To the most hateful seeing of itself.
 Golden his hair of short Numidian curl,
 Regal his shape majestic, a vast shade
 In midst of his own brightness, like the bulk
 Of Memnon's image at the set of sun
 To one who travels from the dusking East.
 Sighs, too, as mournful as that Memnon's harp
 He utter'd, while his hands contemplative
 He press'd together, and in silence stood.
 Despondence seiz'd again the fallen Gods
 At sight of the dejected King of Day,
 And many hid their faces from the light :
 But fierce Enceladus sent forth his eyes
 Among the brotherhood ; and, at their glare,
 Uprose Iapetus, and Creus too,
 And Phorcus, sea-born, and together strode
 To where he towered on his eminence.
 There those four shouted forth old Saturn's name ;
 Hyperion from the peak loud answered, ' Saturn !'
 Saturn sat near the Mother of the Gods,
 In whose face was no joy, though all the Gods
 Gave from their hollow throats the name of ' Saturn !'

BOOK III

Thus in alternate uproar and sad peace,
 Amazed were those Titans utterly
 O leave them, Muse ! O leave them to their woes !
 For thou art weak to sing such tumults dire .
 A solitary sorrow best befits
 Thy lips, and antheming a lonely grief.
 Leave them, O Muse ! for thou anon wilt find
 Many a fallen old Divinity
 Wandering in vain about bewildered shores.
 Meantime touch piously the Delphic harp.
 And not a wind of heaven but will breathe
 In aid soft warble from the Dorian flute ,

For lo ! 'tis for the Father of all verse.
Flush every thing that hath a vermeil hue,
Let the rose glow intense and warm the air,
And let the clouds of even and of morn
Float in voluptuous fleeces o'er the hills ;
Let the red wine within the goblet boil,
Cold as a bubbling well ; let faint-lipp'd shells,
On sands, or in great deeps, vermilion turn
Through all their labyrinths , and let the maid
Blush keenly, as with some warm kiss surprised.
Chief isle of the embowered Cyclades,
Rejoice, O Delos, with thine olives green,
And poplars, and lawn-shading palms, and beech,
In which the Zephyr breathes the loudest song,
And hazels thick, dark-stemm'd beneath the shade :
Apollo is once more the golden theme !
Where was he, when the Giant of the Sun
Stood bright, amid the sorrow of his peers ?
Together had he left his mother fair
And his twin-sister sleeping in their bower,
And in the morning twilight wandered forth
Beside the osiers of a rivulet,
Full ankle-deep in lilies of the vale.
The nightingale had ceased, and a few stars
Were lingering in the heavens, while the thrush
Began calm-throated. - Throughout all the isle
There was no covert, no retired cave
Unhaunted by the murmurous noise of waves.
Though scarcely heard in many a green recess.
He listen'd, and he wept, and his bright tears
Went trickling down the golden bow he held.
Thus with half-shut suffused eyes he stood,
While from beneath some cumbrous boughs hard by
With solemn step an awful Goddess came,
And there was purport in her looks for him,
Which he with eager guess began to read
Ferplex'd, the while melodiously he said -
' How cam'st thou over the unfooted sea ?

' Until a melancholy numbs my limbs ;
' And then upon the grass I sit, and moan,
' Like one who once had wings.—O why should I
' Feel cursed and thwarted, when the liegeless air
' Yields to my step aspirant? why should I
' Spurn the green turf as hateful to my feet?
' Goddess benign, point forth some unknown thing :
' Are there not other regions than this isle ?
' What are the stars? There is the sun, the sun !
' And the most patient brilliance of the moon !
' And stars by thousands ! Point me out the way
' To any one particular beauteous star,
' And I will flit into it with my lyre,
' And make its silvery splendour pant with bliss
' I have heard the cloudy thunder :—Where is power ?
' Whose hand, whose essence, what divinity
' Makes this alarum in the elements,
' While I here idle listen on the shores
' In fearless yet in aching ignorance ?
' O tell me, lonely Goddess ! by thy harp,
' That wailleth every morn and eventide,
' Tell me why thus I rave, about these groves !
' Mute thou remainest—mute? yet I can read
' A wondrous lesson in thy silent face :
' Knowledge enormous makes a God of me.
' Names, deeds, gray legends, dire events, rebellions,
' Majesties, sovrain voices, agonies,
' Creations and destroyings, all at once
' Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,
' And deify me, as if some blithe wine
' Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,
' And so become immortal.'—Thus the God,
While his enkindled eyes, with level glance
Beneath his white soft temples, steadfast kept
Trembling with light upon Mnemosyne.
Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush
All the immortal fairness of his limbs :
Most like the struggle at the gate of death ;

POSTHUMOUS POÉMS.

SONNET

TO SPENSER

SPENSER ! a jealous honourer of thine,
A forester deep in thy mid-most trees,
Did, last eve, ask my promise to refine
Some English, that might strive thine ear to please.
But Elfin-poet ! 'tis impossible
For an inhabitant of wintry earth
To rise, like Phœbus, with a golden quill
Fire-winged and make a morning in his mirth
It is impossible to 'scape from toil
O' the sudden, and receive thy spuiting ·
The flower must drink the nature of the soil
Before it can put forth its blossoming ·
Be with me in the summer days, and I
Will for thine honour and his pleasure try.

SONNET

TO CHATTERTON

O CHATTERTON ! how very sad thy fate !
Dear child of sorrow—son of misery !
How soon the film of death obscured that eye,
Whence Genius mildly flashed, and high debate.
How soon that voice, majestic and elate,
Melted in dying numbers ! Oh ! how nigh
Was night to thy fair morning. Thou didst die
A half-blown flow'ret which cold blasts amate.
But this is past : thou art among the stairs
Of highest Heaven : to the rolling spheres
Thou sweetly singest. naught thy hymning mars,
Above the ingrate world and human fears.
On earth the good man base distraction bars
From thy fair name ; and waters it with tears.

SONNET

TO BYRON

BYRON ! how sweetly 'sad thy melody '
 Attuning still the soul to tenderness,
 As if soft Pity, with unusual stress,
 Had touched her plaintive lute, and thou, being by,
 Hadst caught the tones, nor suffer'd them to die
 O'ershadowing sorrow doth not make thee less
 Delightful : thou thy griefs dost dress
 With a bright halo, shining beamily,
 As when a cloud the golden moon doth veil,
 Its sides are tinged with a resplendent glow,
 Through the dark robe oft amber rays prevail
 And like fair veins in sable marble flow ;
 Still warble, dying swan ! still tell the tale,
 The enchanting tale, the tale of pleasing woe.

ODE TO APOLLO

I

IN thy western halls of gold
 When thou sittest in thy state,
 Bards, that erst sublimely told
 Heroic deeds, and sang of fate,
 With fervour seize their adamantyne lyres,
 Whose chords are solid rays, and twinkle radiant fires

II

Here Homer with his nervous arms
 Strikes the twanging harp of war,
 And even the western splendour warms,
 While the trumpets sound afar
 But, what creates the most intense surprise,
 His soul looks out through renovated eyes.

III

Then, through thy Temple wide, melodious swells
The sweet majestic tone of Maro's lyre :
The soul delighted on each accent dwells,—
Enraptured dwells,—not daring to respire,
The while he tells of grief around a funeral pyre.

IV

'Tis awful silence then again ;
Expectant stand the spheres ;
Breathless the laurell'd peers,
Nor move, till ends the lofty strain,
Nor move till Milton's tuneful thunders cease,
And leave once more the ravish'd heavens in peace

V

Thou biddest Shakspeare wave his hand,
And quickly forward spring
The Passions—a terrific band—
And each vibrates the string
That with its tyrant temper best accords,
While from their Master's lips pour forth the inspiring
words.

VI

A silver trumpet Spenser blows,
And, as its martial notes to silence flee,
From a virgin chorus flows
A hymn in praise of spotless Chastity.
'Tis still ! Wild warblings from the Æolian lyre
Enchantment softly breathe, and tremblingly expire.

VII

Next thy Tasso's ardent numbers
 Float along the pleased air,
 Calling youth from idle slumbers,
 Rousing them from Pleasure's lair.—
 Then o'er the strings his fingers gently move,
 And melt the soul to pity and to love.

VIII

But when *I'han* joinest with the Nine,
 And all the powers of song combine,
 We listen here on earth—
 The dying tones that fill the air,
 And charm the ear of evening fair,
 From thee, great God of Bards, receive their
 heavenly birth.

Feb. 1815

SONNET

ON LEIGH HUNT'S POEM, 'THE STORY OF RIMINI'

Who loves to peer up at the morning sun,
 With half-shut eyes and comfortable cheek,
 Let him, with this sweet tale, full often seek
 For meadows where the little rivers run,
 Who loves to linger with that brightest one
 Of Heaven—Hesperus—let him lowly speak
 These numbers to the night, and starlight meek
 Or moon, if that her hunting be begun.
 He who knows these delights, and too is prone
 To moralise upon a smile or tear,
 Will find at once a region of his own,
 A bower for his spirit, and will steer
 To alleys where the fir-tree drops its cone,
 Where robins hop, and fallen leaves are sear.

SONNET

WRITTEN AT THE END OF CHAUCER'S TALE OF
'THE FLOURE AND THE LEFE'

THIS pleasant tale is like a little copse :
The honeyed lines do freshly interlace
To keep the reader in so sweet a place,
So that he here and there full-hearted stops ;
And oftentimes he feels the dewy drops
Come cool and suddenly against his face,
And, by the wandering melody, may trace
Which way the tender-legged linnet hops.
Oh ! what a power hath white simplicity !
What mighty power has this gentle story !
I, that for ever feel athirst for glory,
Could at this moment be content to lie
Meekly upon the grass, as those whose sobbings
Were heard of none beside the mournful robins

SONNET

Oh ! how I love, on a fair summer's eve,
When streams of light pour down the golden west,
And on the balmy zephyrs tranquil rest
The silver clouds, far—far away to leave
All meaner thoughts, and take a sweet reprieve
From little cares ; to find, with easy quest,
A fragrant wild, with Nature's beauty drest,
And there into delight my soul deceive.
There warm my breast with patriotic lore,
Musing on Milton's fate—on Sydney's bier—
Till their stern forms before my mind arise :
Perhaps on wing of Poesy upsoar,
Full often dropping a delicious tear,
When some melodious sorrow spells mine eyes.

SONNET

TO A YOUNG LADY WHO SENT ME A LAUREL CROWN

FRESH morning gusts have blown away all fear
 From my glad bosom,—now from gloominess
 I mount for ever—not an atom less
 Than the proud laurel shall content my bier.
 No! by the eternal stars! or why sit here
 In the Sun's eye, and 'gainst my temples press
 Apollo's very leaves, woven to bless
 By thy white fingers and thy spirit clear.
 Lo! who dares say, 'Do this.'? Who dares call down
 My will from its high purpose? Who say, 'Stand,'
 Or 'Go'? This mighty moment I would frown
 On abject Cæsars—not the stoutest band
 Of mailed heroes should tear off my crown
 Yet would I kneel and kiss thy gentle hand!

SONNET

AFTER dark vapours have oppress'd our plains
 For a long dreary season, comes a day
 Born of the gentle South, and clears away
 From the sick heavens all unseemly stains
 The anxious month, relieved of its pains,
 Takes as a long-lost right the feel of May;
 The eyelids with the passing coolness play,
 Like rose-leaves with the drip of summer rains
 And calmest thoughts come round us—as, of leaves—
 Budding—fruit ripening in stillness—Autumn suns
 Smiling at eve upon the quiet sheaves—
 Sweet Sappho's cheek—a sleeping infant's breath—
 The gradual sand that through an hour-glass runs—
 A woodland rivulet—a Poet's death.

SONNET

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SONNET

ON THE ELGIN MARBLES

My spirit is too weak ; mortality
 Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,
 And each imagined pinnacle and steep
 Of godlike hardship, tells me I must die
 Like a sick Eagle looking at the sky.
 Yet 'tis a gentle luxury to weep
 That I have not the cloudy winds to keep,
 Fresh for the opening of the morning's eye.
 Such dim-conceived glories of the brain,
 Bring round the heart an undescribable feud ;
 So do these wonders a most dizzy pain,
 That mingles Grecian grandeur with the rude
 Wasting of old Time—with a billowy main—
 A sun—a shadow of a magnitude.

SONNET

TO HAYDON, ENCLOSING THE PRECEDING

HAYDON ! forgive me that I cannot speak
 Definitively on these mighty things ;
 Forgive me, that I have not eagle's wings,
 That what I want I know not where to seek.
 And think that I would not be over-meek—
 In rolling out upfollowed thunders,
 Even to the steep of Heliconian springs,
 Were I of ample strength for such a freak—
 Think, too, that all those numbers should be thine ;
 Whose else ? In this who touch thy vesture's hem ?
 For, when men star'd at what was most divine
 With brainless idiotism and o'erwise phlegm,
 Thou hadst beheld the Hesperian shine
 Of their star in the East, and gone to worship them.

SONNET

ON A PICTURE OF LEANDER

COME hither, all sweet maidens soberly,
 Down-looking aye, and with a chasten'd light,
 Hid in the hinges of your eyelids white,
 And meekly let your fair hands joined be,
 As if so gentle that ye could not see,
 Untouch'd, a victim of your beauty bright,
 Sinking away to his young spirit's night,—
 Sinking bewilder'd 'mid the dreary sea
 'Tis young Leander toiling to his death;
 Nigh swooning, he doth purse his weary lips
 For Hero's cheek, and smiles against her smile.
 O horrid dream! see how his body dips
 Dead-heavy, arms and shoulders gleam awhile:
 He's gone. up bubbles all his amorous breath!

TO —

THINK not of it, sweet one, so;—
 Give it not a tear;
 Sigh thou mayst, and bid it go
 Any—anywhere

Do not look so sad, sweet one,—
 Sad and fadingly;
 Shed one drop then—it is gone—
 Oh! 'twas born to die!

Still so pale? then, dearest, weep;
 Weep, I'll count the tears,
 And each one shall be a bliss
 For thee in after years.



there he stry'd to view
The misery his brilliance had
betray'd

LINES

Brighter has it left thine eyes
Than a sunny rill;
And thy whispering melodies
Are tenderer still.

Yet—as all things mourn awhile
At fleeting blisses,—
Let us too! but be our dirge
A dirge of kisses.

1817

LINES

UNFELT, unheard, unseen,
I've left my little queen,
Her languid arms in silver slumber lying:
Ah! through their nestling touch,
Who—who could tell how much
There is for madness—cruel; or complying?

Those faery lids how sleek!
Those lips how moist!—they speak,
In ripest quiet, shadows of sweet sounds:—
Into my fancy's ear
Melting a burden dear,
How 'Love doth know no fullness, nor no bounds.'

True!—tender monitors!
I bend unto your laws:
This sweetest day for dalliance was born!
So, without more ado,—
I'll feel my heaven anew,
For all the blushing of the hasty morn.

1817

J. K.

SONNET

ON THE SEA

It keeps eternal whisperings around
 Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell
 Gluts twice ten thousand caverns, till the spell
 Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.
 Often 'tis in gentle temper found,
 That scarcely will the very smallest shell
 Be moy'd for days from where it sometime fell,
 When last the winds of Heaven were unbound
 Oh ye ! who have your eyeballs vex'd and tir'd,
 Feast them upon the wideness of the Sea ;
 Oh ye ! whose ears are dinn'd with uproar rude,
 Or fed too much with cloying melody—
 Sit ye near some old Cavern's Mouth, and brood
 Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs quir'd !

 LINES ON SEEING A LOCK OF
 MILTON'S HAIR

CHIEF of organic numbers !
 Old Scholar of the Spheres !
 Thy spirit never slumbers,
 But rolls about our ears
 For ever and for ever !
 O what a mad endeavour
 Worketh he,
 Who to thy sacred and ennobled hearse
 Would offer a burnt sacrifice of verse
 And melody.

How heavenward thou soundest !
Live Temple of sweet noise,
And Discord unconfoundest,
Giving Delight new joys,
And Pleasure nobler pinions :
O, where are thy dominions ?

Lend thine ear
To a young Delian oath,—ay, by thy soul,
By all that from thy mortal lips did roll,
And by the kernel of thine earthly love,
Beauty, in things on earth, and things above
I swear !

When every childish fashion
Has vanished from my rhyme,
Will I, gray-gone in passion,
Leave to an after-time,
Hymning and harmony
Of thee and of thy works, and of thy life ;
But vain is now the burning and the strife,
Pangs are in vain, until I grow high-rife
With old Philosophy,
And mad with glimpses of futurity !

For many years my offerings must be hush'd ;
When I do speak, I'll think upon this hour,
Because I feel my forehead hot and flush'd,
Even at the simplest vassal of thy power,
A lock of thy bright hair,—
Sudden it came,
And I was startled when I caught thy name
Coupled so unaware ;
Yet, at the moment, temperate was my blood.
I thought I had beheld it from the flood.

SONNET

WHEN I have fears that I may cease to be
 Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,
 Before high-piled books, in charactry,
 Hold like rich garners the full-ripen'd grain ;
 When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,
 Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
 And feel that I may never live to trace
 Their shadows with the magic hand of chance ;
 And when I feel, fair creature of an hour !
 That I shall never look upon thee more,
 Never have relish in the faery power,
 Of unreflecting love !—then on the shore
 Of the wide-world I stand alone, and think
 Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

 LINES FROM A LETTER TO JOHN
 HAMILTON REYNOLDS

O THOU whose face hath felt the Winter's wind,
 Whose eye hath seen the snow-clouds hung in mist,
 And the black elm tops 'mong the freezing stars,
 To thee the Spring will be a harvest-time.
 O thou, whose only book has been the light
 Of supreme darkness which thou feddest on
 Night after night, when Phœbus was away,
 To thee the Spring shall be a triple morn.
 O fret not after knowledge !—I have none,
 And yet my song comes native with the warmth.
 O fret not after knowledge !—I have none,
 And yet the Evening listens He who saddens
 At thought of idleness cannot be idle,
 And he's awake who thinks himself asleep.

SONNET

SONNET

THE HUMAN SEASONS.

FOUR Seasons fill the measure of the year ;
There are four seasons in the mind of man
He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clear
Takes in all beauty with an easy span :
He has his Summer, when luxuriously
Spring's honeyed cud of youthful thought he loves
To ruminate, and by such dreaming high
Is nearest unto heaven : quiet coves
His soul has in its Autumn, when his wings
He furleth close ; contented so to look
On mists in idleness—to let fair things
Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook.
He has his Winter, too of pale misfeature,
Or else he would forgo his mortal nature.

EXTRACTS FROM AN OPERA

O ! WERE I one of the Olympian twelve,
Their godships should pass this into a law,—
That when a man doth set himself in toil
After some beauty veiled far away,
Each step he took should make his lady's hand
More soft, more white, and her fair cheek more fair ;
And for each brier-berry he might eat,
A kiss should bud upon the tree of love,
And pulp and ripen richer every hour,
To melt away upon the traveller's lips.

EXTRACTS FROM AN OPÉRA

DAISY'S SONG

I

The sun, with his great eye,
Sees not so much as I ;
And the moon, all silver-proud,
Might as well be in a cloud.

II

And O the spring—the spring !
I lead the life of a king !
Couch'd in the teeming grass,
I spy each pretty lass.

III

I look where no one dares,
And I stare where no one stares,
And when the night is nigh,
Lambs bleat my lullaby.

.

FOLLY'S SONG

WHEN wedding fiddles are a-playing,
Huzza for folly O !
And when maidens go a-Maying,
Huzza, etc.
When a milk-pail is upset,
Huzza, etc.
And the clothes left in the wet,
Huzza, etc.
When the barrel's set abroach,
Huzza, etc.
When Kate Eyebrow keeps a coach,
Huzza, etc

When the pig is over-roasted,
Huzza, etc.
And the cheese is over-toasted,
Huzza, etc.
When Sir Snap is with his lawyer,
Huzza, etc
And Miss Chip has kissed the sawyer,
Huzza, etc.

.

Oh, I am frighten'd with most hateful thoughts !
Perhaps her voice is not a nightingale's,
Perhaps her teeth are not the fairest pearl ;
Her eyelashes may be, for aught I know,
Not longer than the May-fly's small fan-horns ;
There may not be one dimple on her hand ;
And freckles many ; ah ! a careless nurse,
In haste to teach the little thing to walk,
May have crumpt up a pair of Dian's legs,
And warpt the ivory of a Juno's neck.

.

SONG

I

THE stranger lighted from his steed,
And ere he spake a word,
He seiz'd my lady's lily hand,
And kiss'd it all unheard.

II

The stranger walk'd into the hall,
And ere he spake a word,
He kiss'd my lady's cherry lips,
And kiss'd 'em all unheard.

III

The stranger walk'd into the bower,—
 But my lady first did go,—
 Ay, hand in hand into the bower,
 Where my lord's roses blow.

IV

My lady's maid had a silken scarf,
 And a golden ring had she,
 And a kiss from the stranger, as off he went
 Again on his fair palfrey.

ASLEEP ! O sleep a little while, white pearl !
 And let me kneel, and let me pray to thee,
 And let me call Heaven's blessing on thine eyes,
 And let me breathe into the happy air,
 That doth enfold and touch thee all about,
 Vows of my slavery, my giving up,
 My sudden adoration, my great love !

1818

FAERY SONG

SHED no tear—O, shed no tear :
 The flower will bloom another year.
 Weep no more ! O weep no more !
 Young buds sleep in the root's white core.
 Dry your eyes ! O, dry your eyes,
 For I was taught in Paradise
 To ease my breast of melodies—
 Shed no tear.

Overhead ! look overhead !
 'Mong the blossoms white and red—
 Look up, look up. I flutter now
 On this flush pomegranate bough.
 See me ! 'tis this silvery bill
 Ever cures the good man's ill.
 Shed no tear ! O shed no tear !
 The flower will bloom another year.
 Adieu, adieu—I fly, adieu,
 I vanish in the heaven's blue—
 Adieu, adieu !

SONG

WRITTEN ON A BLANK PAGE IN BEAUMONT AND
 FLETCHER'S WORKS

SPIRIT here that reignest !
 Spirit here that painest !
 Spirit here that burnest !
 Spirit here that mournest !
 Spirit, I bow
 My forehead low,
 Enshaded with thy pinions !
 Spirit, I look
 All passion-struck
 Into thy pale dominions !

Spirit here that laughest !
 Spirit here that quaffest !
 Spirit here that dancest !
 Noble soul that prancest !
 Spirit; with thee
 I join in the glee,
 While nudging the elbow of Momus.
 Spirit, I flush
 With a Bacchanal blush
 Just fresh from the Banquet of Comus.

FAERY SONG

AH ! woe is me ! poor silver-wing !
 That I must chant thy lady's dirge,
 And death to this fair haunt of spring,
 Of melody, and streams of flowery verge,—
 Poor silver-wing ! ah ! woe is me !
 That I must see
 These blossoms snow upon thy lady's pall !
 Go, pretty page ! and in her ear
 Whisper that the hour is near !
 Softly tell her not to fear
 Such calm favonian burial !
 Go, pretty page ! and soothly tell,—
 The blossoms hang by a melting spell,
 And fall they must, ere a star wink thrice.
 Upon her closed eyes,
 That now in vain are weeping their last tears,
 At sweet life leaving, and these arbours green,—
 Rich dowry from the Spirit of the Spheres,—
 Alas ! poor Queen !

- SONNET

ON SITTING DOWN TO READ 'KING LEAR' ONCE AGAIN

O GOLDEN tongued Romance with serene lute !
 Fair plumed Syren ! Queen ! if far away !
 Leave melodising on this wintry day,
 Shut up thine olden volume, and be mute.
 Adieu ! for once again the fierce dispute
 Betwixt Hell torment and impassioned clay
 Must I burn through ; once more humbly assay
 The bitter sweet of this Shakespearian fruit :

Chief Poet ! and ye clouds of Albion,
Begetters of our deep eternal theme !
When I am through the old oak Forest gone,
Let me not wander in a barren dream,
But when I am consumed in the fire
Give me new Phoenix wings to fly at my desire:

SONNET

TO THE NILE

SON of the old moon-mountains African !
Stream of the Pyramid and Crocodile !
We call thee fruitful, and that very while,
A desert fills our seeing's inward span ;
Nurse of swart nations since the world began,
Art thou so fruitful ? or dost thou beguile
Those men to honour thee, who, worn with toil,
Rest for a space 'twixt Cairo and Decan ?
O may dark fancies err ! They surely do ;
'Tis ignorance that makes a barren waste
Of all beyond itself. Thou dost bedew
Green rushes like our rivers, and dost taste
The pleasant sunrise, green isles hast thou too,
And to the sea as happily dost haste.

EPISTLE TO JOHN HAMILTON
REYNOLDS

DEAR Reynolds ! as last night I lay in bed,
 There came before my eyes that wonted thread
 Of shapes, and shadows, and remembrances,
 That every other minute vex and please :
 Things all disjointed come from north and south,—
 Two Witch's eyes above a Cherub's mouth,
 Voltaire with casque and shield and habergeon,
 And Alexander with his nightcap on ;
 Old Socrates a-tying his cravat,
 And Hazlitt playing with Miss Edgeworth's cat ;
 And Junius Brutus, pretty well so-so,
 Making the best of's way towards Soho.

Few are there who escape these visitings,—
 Perhaps one or two whose lines have patent wings,
 And thro' whose curtains peeps no hellish nose,
 No wild-boar tushes, and no Mermaid's toes,
 But flowers bursting out with lusty pride,
 And young Æolian harps personified,
 Some Titian colours touch'd into real life,—
 The sacrifice goes on ; the pontiff knife
 Gleams in the Sun, the milk-white heifer lows,
 The pipes go shrilly, the libation flows :
 A white-sail shows above the green-head cliff,
 Moves round the point, and throws her anchor stiff ;
 The mariners join hymn with those on land.

You know the Enchanted Castle,—it doth stand
 Upon a rock, on the border of a Lake,
 Nested in trees, which all do seem to shake
 From some old magic-like Urganda's Sword.
 O Phœbus ! that I had thy sacred word
 To show this Castle, in fair dreaming wise,
 Unto my friend, while sick and ill he lies !

EPISTLE TO JOHN H. REYNOLDS 301

You know it well enough, where it doth seem
A mossy place, a Merlin's Hall, a dream ;
You know the clear Lake, and the little Isles,
The mountains blue, and cold near neighbour rills,
All which elsewhere are but half animate ;
There do they look alive to love and hate,
To smiles and frowns ; they seem a lifted mound
Above some giant, pulsing underground.

Part of the Building was a chosen See,
Built by a banish'd Santon of Chaldee ;
The other part, two thousand years from him,
Was built by Cuthbert de Saint Aldebrim ;
Then there's a little wing, far from the Sun,
Built by a Lapland Witch turn'd maudlin Nun ;
And many other juts of aged stone
Founded with many a mason-devil's groan.

The doors all look as if they op'd themselves,
The windows as if latch'd by Fays and Elves,
And from them comes a silver-flash of light,
As from the westward of a Summer's night ;
Or like a beauteous woman's large blue eyes
Gone mad thro' olden songs and poesies.

See ! what is coming from the distance dim !
A golden Galley all in silken trim !
Three rows of oars are lightening, moment whiles,
Into the verd'rous bosoms of those isles ;
Towards the shade, under the Castle wall,
It comes in silence,—now 'tis hidden all.
The Clarion sounds, and from a Postern-gate
An echo of sweet music doth create
A fear in the poor Herdsmen, who doth bring
His beasts to trouble the enchanted spring,—
He tells of the sweet music, and the spot,
To all his friends, and they believe him not.

O, that our dreamings all, of sleep or wake,
 Would all their colours from the sunset take :
 From something of material sublime,
 Rather than shadow our own soul's daytime
 In the dark void of night. For in the world
 We jostle,—but my flag is not unfurl'd
 On the Admiral-staff,—and so philosophise
 I dare not yet ! Oh, never will the prize,
 High reason, and the love of good and ill,
 Be my award ! Things cannot to the will
 Be settled, but they tease us out of thought ;
 Or is it that imagination brought
 Beyond its proper bound, yet still confin'd,
 Lost in a sort of Purgatory blind,
 Cannot refer to any standard law
 Of either earth or heaven ? . It is a flaw
 In happiness, to see beyond our bourn,—
 It forces us in summer skies to mourn,
 It spoils the singing of the Nightingale.

Dear Reynolds ! I have a mysterious tale,
 And cannot speak it : the first page I read
 Upon a Lampit rock of green seaweed
 Among the breakers ; 'twas a quiet eve,
 The rocks were silent, the wide sea did weave
 An untumultuous fringe of silver foam
 Along the flat brown sand ; I was at home
 And should've been most happy,—but I saw
 Too far into the sea, where every maw
 The greater on the less feeds evermore.—
 But I saw too distinct into the core
 Of an eternal fierce destruction,
 And so from happiness I far was gone.
 Still am I sick of it, and tho', to-day,
 I've gather'd young spring-leaves, and flowers gay
 Of periwinkle and wild strawberry,
 Still do I that most fierce destruction see,—

The Shark at savage prey,—the Hawk at pounce,—
 The gentle Robin, like a Pard or Ounce,
 Ravening a worm,—Away, ye horrid moods !
 Moods of one's mind ! You know I hate them well.
 You know I'd sooner be a clapping Bell
 To some Kamtschatcan Missionary Church,
 Than with these horrid moods be left i' the lurch.

TEIGNMOUTH

'SOME DOGGEREL' SENT IN A LETTER TO B. R. HAYDON

I

HERE all the summer could I stay,
 For there's Bishop's teign
 And King's teign
 And Coomb at the clear Teign's head—
 Where close by the stream
 You may have your cream
 All spread upon barley bread.

II

There's arch Brook
 And there's larch Brook
 Both turning many a mill ;
 And cooling the drouth
 Of the salmon's mouth,
 And fattening his silver gill.

III

There is wild wood,
 A mild hood
 To the sheep on the lea o' the down
 Where the golden-furze,
 With its green; thin spurs,
 Doth catch at the maiden's gown.

TEIGNMOUTH

IV

There is Newton marsh
With its spear grass harsh—
A pleasant summer level ;
Where the maidens sweet
Of the Market Street,
Do meet in the dusk to revel.

V

There's Barton rich
With dyke and ditch
And hedge for the thrush to live in,
And the hollow tree
For the buzzing bee
And a bank for the wasp to hive in.

VI

And O and O,
The daisies blow
And the primroses are wakened,
And the violets white
Sit in silver light,
And the green bud's are long the spike end.

VII

Then who would go
Into dark Soho,
And chatter with dank-haired critics,
When he can stay
For the new-mown hay,
And startle the dappled crickets ?

THE DEVON MAID

SENT IN A LETTER TO B. R. HAYDON

WHERE be ye going, you Devon maid?
And what have ye there in the basket?
Ye tight little fairy, just fresh from the dairy
Will ye give me some cream if I ask it?

I love your hills, and I love your dales,
And I love your flocks a-bleating—
But O, on the heather to lie together,
With both our hearts a-beating!

I'll put your basket all safe in a nook,
Your shawl I hang up on the willow,
And we will sigh in the daisy's eye
And kiss on a grass green pillow.

DAWLISH-FAIR

OVER the Hill and over the Dale,
And over the Bourne to Dawlish,
Where ginger-bread wives have a scanty sale,
And ginger-bread nuts a smallish.

FRAGMENT OF AN ODE TO MAIA,
WRITTEN ON MAY DAY, 1818

MOTHER of Hermes ! and still youthful Maia !
 May I sing to thee
 As thou wast hymned on the shores of Baiæ ?
 Or may I woo thee
 In earlier Sicilian ? or thy smiles
 Seek as they once were sought, in Grecian isles,
 By bards who died content on pleasant sward,
 Leaving great verse unto a little clan ?
 O, give me their old vigour, and unheard
 Save of the quiet Primrose, and the span
 Of heaven and few ears,
 Rounded by thee, my song should die away
 Contents as theirs,
 Rich in the simple worship of a day.

SONNET

WRITTEN IN THE COTTAGE WHERE BURNS WAS BORN

THIS mortal body of a thousand days
 Now fills, O Burns, a space in thine own room,
 Where thou didst dream alone on budded bays
 Happy and thoughtless of thy day of doom !
 My pulse is warm with thine own Barley-bree,
 My head is light with pledging a great soul,
 My eyes are wandering, and I cannot see,
 Fancy is dead and drunken at its goal ;
 Yet can I stamp my foot upon thy floor,
 Yet can I ope thy window-sash to find

The meadow thou hast tramped o'er and o'er,—
Yet can I think of thee till thought of blind,—
Yet can I gulp a bumper to thy name,—
O smile among the shades, for this is fame!

MEG MERRILIES

OLD MEG she was a gipsy,
And lived upon the moors :
Her bed it was the brown heath turf,
And her house was out of doors.
Her apples were swart blackberries,
Her currants, pods o' broom ;
Her wine was dew of the wild white rose,
Her book a churchyard tomb.

Her brothers were the craggy hills,
Her sisters larchen trees ;
Alone with her great family
She lived as she did please.
No breakfast had she many a morn,
No dinner many a noon,
And, 'stead of supper, she would stare
Full hard against the moon.

But, every morn, of woodbine fresh
She made her garlanding,
And, every night, the dark glen yew
She wove, and she would sing.
And with her fingers, old and brown,
She plaited mats o' rushes,
And gave them to the cottagers
She met among the bushes.

SONNET

Old Meg was brave as Margaret Queen
And tall as Amazon ;
An old red blanket cloak she wore ;
A ship-hat had she on
God rest her aged bones somewhere—
She died full long ago !

SONNET

TO AILSA ROCK

HEARKEN, thou craggy ocean pyramid !
Give answer from thy voice, the sea-fowls' screams !
When were thy shoulders mantled in huge streams !
When, from the sun, was thy broad forehead hid ?
How long is 't since the mighty power bid
Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom dreams ?
Sleep in the lap of thunder or sunbeams,
Or when gray clouds are thy cold coverlid
Thou answer'st not, for thou art dead asleep !
Thy life is but two dead eternities—
The last in air, the former in the deep ;
First with the whales, last with the eagle's-skies—
Drown'd wast thou till an earthquake made thee steep,
Another cannot wake thy giant size.

LINES

WRITTEN IN THE HIGHLANDS AFTER A VISIT
TO BURNS'S COUNTRY .

THERE is a charm in footing slow across a silent plain,
Where patriot battle has been fought, where glory
had the gain ;

There is a pleasure on the heath, where Druids old
have been,

Where mantles gray have rustled by and swept the
nettles green ;

There is a joy in every spot made known by times of
old,

New to the feet, altho' each tale a hundred times be
told ;

There is a deeper joy than all, more solemn in the
heart,

More parching to the tongue than all, of more divine
a smart,

When weary steps forget themselves upon a pleasant
turf,

Upon hot sand, or flinty road, or seashore iron scurf,
Toward the castle or the cot, where long ago was born
One who was great through mortal days, and died
of fame unshorn.

Light heather-bells may tremble then, but they are far
away ;

Wood-lark may sing from sandy fern,—the Sun may
hear his lay ;

Runnels may kiss the grass on shelves and shallows
clear,

But their low voices are not heard, tho' come on
travels drear ;

Blood-red the sun may set behind black mountain
peaks ;
Blue tides may sluice and drench their time in caves
and weedy creeks ;
Eagles may seem to sleep wing-wide upon the air,
Ring-doves may fly convulsed across to some high-
cedared lair ;
But the forgotten eye is still fast lidded to the ground,
As Palmer's, that with weariness mid-desert shrine
hath found

At such a time the soul's a child, in childhood is the
brain ;
Forgotten is the worldly heart—alone it beats in
vain !
Ay, if a madman could have leave to pass a healthful
day
To tell his forehead's swoon and faint, when first
began decay,
He might make tremble many a one, whose spirit had
gone forth
To find a Bard's low cradle-place about the silent
north !

Scanty the hour, and few the steps, beyond the bourn
of care,
Beyond the sweet and bitter world,—beyond it
unaware !
Scanty the hour, and few the steps, because a longer
stay
Would bar return, and make a man forget his mortal
way !
O horrible ! to lose the sight of well-remembered face,
Of Brother's eyes, of Sister's brow—constant to every
place ;
Filling the air as on we move with portraiture intense,
More warm than those heroic tints that pain a
painter's sense,

When shapes of old come striding by, and visages
of old,

Locks shining black, hair scanty gray, and passions
manifold !

No, no,—that horror cannot be ! for at the cable's length
Man feels the gentle anchor pull, and gladdens in its
strength :—

One hour, half idiot, he stands by mossy waterfall,
But in the very next he reads his soul's memorial ;
He reads it on the mountain's height, where chance he
may sit down

Upon rough marble diadem, that hill's eternal crown.
Yet be his anchor e'er so fast, room is there for a prayer
That man may never lose his mind on mountains black
and bare ;

That he may stray, league after league, some great
birthplace to find

And keep his vision clear from speck, his inward sight
unblind.

STAFFA

Not Aladdin magian
Ever such a work began ;
Not the wizard of the Dee
Ever such a dream could see ;
Not St John, in Patmos' Isle,
In the passion of his toil,
When he saw the churches seven,
Golden aisl'd, built up in heaven,
Gaz'd at such a rugged wonder.
As I stood its roofing under,
Lo ! I saw one sleeping there,
On the marble cold and bare
While the surges wash'd his feet,
And his garments white did beat

STAFFA

Drench'd about the sombre rocks ;
On his neck his well-grown locks,
Lifted dry above the main,
Were upon the curl again.
'What is this ? and what art thou ?'
Whispered I, and touched his brow ;
'What art thou ? and what is this ?'
Whispered I, and strove to kiss
The spirit's hand, to wake his eyes ;
Up he started in a trice :
'I am Lycidas,' said he,
'Fam'd in funeral minstrelsy !'
This was architectur'd thus
By the great Oceanus !—
Here his mighty waters play
Hollow organs all the day ;
Here, by turns, his dolphins all,
Finny palmers, great and small,
Come to pay devotion due,—
Each a mouth of pearls must strew.
Many a mortal of these days,
Dares to pass our sacred ways ;
Dares to touch audaciously
This cathedral of the sea !
I have been the pontiff-priest
Where the waters never rest,
Where a fledgy sea-bird choir
Soars for ever ! Holy fire
I have hid from mortal man ;
Proteus is my Sacristan !
But the dulled eye of mortal
Hath passed beyond the rocky portal
So for ever will I leave
Such a taint, and soon unweave
All the magic of the place '

So saying, with a spirit's glance
He dived !

SONNET

WRITTEN UPON THE TOP OF BEN NEVIS

READ me a lesson, Muse, and speak it loud
 Upon the top of Nevis, blind in mist !
 I look into the chasms, and a shroud
 Vaporous doth hide them,—just so much I wist
 Mankind do know of hell ; I look o'erhead,
 And there is sullen mist,—even so much
 Mankind can tell of heaven ; mist is spread
 Before the earth, beneath me,—even such,
 Even so vague is man's sight of himself !
 Here are the craggy stones beneath my feet,—
 Thus much I know that, a poor witless elf,
 I tread on them,—that all my eye doth meet
 Is mist and crag, not only on this height,
 But in the world of thought and mental might !

A PROPHECY

TO GEORGE KEATS IN AMERICA, WRITTEN AT THE END
 OF A LETTER

'Tis the witching hour of night,
 Orbed is the moon and bright,
 And the stars they glisten, glisten,
 Seeming with bright eyes to listen—
 For what listen they ?
 For a song and for a charm,
 See they glisten in alarm,
 And the moon is waxing warm
 To hear what I shall say.

A PROPHECY

Moon ! keep wide thy golden ears—
Hearken, stars ! and hearken, spheres !-
Hearken, thóu eternal sky !
I sing an infant's lullaby,

A pretty lullaby.

-Listen, listen, listen, listen, .

Glisten, glisten, glisten, glisten,

And hear my lullaby !

Though the rushes that will make
Its cradle still are in the lake—

Though the linen that will be
Its swathe, is on the cotton tree—

Though the woollen that will keep
It warm, is on the silly sheep—

Listen, starlight, listen, listen,

Glisten, glisten, glisten, glisten,

And hear my lullaby !

Child, I see thee ! Child, I've found thee
Midst of the quiet all around thee !

Child, I see thee ! Child, I spy thee !

And thy mother sweet is nigh thee !

Child, I know thee ! Child no more,

But a Poet evermore !

See, see, the lyre, the lyre,

In a flame of fire,

Upon the little cradle's top

Flaring, flaring, flaring,

Past the eyesight's bearing.

Awake it from its sleep,

And see if it can keep

Its eyes upon the blaze—

Amaze, amaze !

It stares, it stares, it stares,

It dares what no one dares !

It lifts its little hand into the flame

Unharm'd, and on the strings

Paddles a little tune, and sings,

With dumb endeavour sweetly—

Bard art thou completely !
 Little child
 O' th' western wild,
 Bard art thou completely !
 Sweetly with dumb endeavour,
 A Poet now or never,
 Little child
 O' th' western wild,
 A Poet now or never !

TRANSLATION FROM A SONNET OF RONSARD

NATURE withheld Cassandra in the skies,
 For more adornment, a full thousand years;
 She took their cream of Beauty, fairest dyes,
 And shap'd and tinted her above all Peers :
 Meanwhile Love kept her dearly with his wings,
 And underneath their shadow filled her eyes
 With such a richness that the cloudy Kings
 Of high Olympus uttered slavish sighs.
 When from the Heavens I saw her first descend,
 My heart took fire, and only burning pains,
 They were my pleasures—they my Life's sad end ;
 Love poured her beauty into my warm veins . . .

.

SONNET

TO SLEEP

O SOFT embalmer of the still midnight,
 Shutting, with careful fingers and benign,
 Our gloom-pleased eyes, embowered from the light,
 Enshaded in forgetfulness divine

O soothest Sleep ! if so it please thee, close
 In midst of this thine hymn, my willing eyes.
 Or wait the amen, ere thy poppy throws
 Around my bed its lulling charities ;
 Then save me, or the passed day will shine
 Upon my pillow, breeding many woes ;
 Save me from curious conscience, that still lords
 Its strength for darkness, burrowing like a mole ;
 Turn the key deftly in the oiled wards,
 And seal the hushed casket of my soul.

STANZAS

I

In a drear-nighted December,
 Too happy, happy tree,
 Thy branches ne'er remember
 Their green felicity :
 The north cannot undo them,
 With a sleety whistle through them ;
 Nor frozen thawings glue them
 From budding at the prime.

II

In a drear-nighted December,
 Too happy, happy brook,
 Thy bubblings ne'er remember
 Apollo's summer look ;
 But with a sweet forgetting,
 They stay their crystal fretting,
 Never, never petting
 About the frozen time.

III

Ah ! would 'twere so with many
 A gentle girl and boy !
 But were there ever any
 Writh'd not at passed joy ?
 To know the change and feel it,
 When there is none to heal it,
 Nor numbed sense to steal it,
 Was never said in rhyme.

SPENSERIAN STANZA

In after-time, a sage of mickle lore
 Yclep'd Typographus, the Giant took,
 And did refit his limbs as heretofore,
 And made him read in many a learned book;
 And into many a lively legend look ;
 Thereby in goodly themes so training him,
 That all his brutishness he quite forsook,
 When, meeting Artegall and Talus grim,
 The one he struck stone-blind, the other's eyes
 wax dim.

SONG

Hush, hush ! tread softly ! hush, hush, my dear !
 All the house is asleep, but we know very well
 That the jealous, the jealous old bald-pate may hear,
 Tho' you've padded his night-cap—O sweet Isabel !
 Tho' your feet are more light than a Faery's feet,
 Who dances on bubbles where brooklets meet,—
 Hush, hush ! soft tiptoe ! hush, hush, my dear !
 For less than a nothing the jealous can hear.

No leaf doth tremble, no ripple is there
 On the river,—all's still, and the night's sleepy eye
 Closes up, and forgets all its Lethean care,
 Charm'd to death by the drone of the humming
 Mayfly ;
 And the Moon, whether prudish or complaisant,
 Has fled to her bower, well knowing I want—
 No light in the desk, no torch in the gloom,
 But my Isabel's eyes, and her lips pulp'd with bloom.

Lift the latch ! ah gently ! ah tenderly—sweet !
 We are dead if that latchet gives one little clink !
 Well done—now those lips, and a flowery seat—
 The old man may sleep, and the planets may wink ;
 The shut rose shall dream of our loves, and awake
 Full blown, and such warmth for the morning
 take,
 The stock-dove shall hatch his soft twin-eggs and coo
 While I kiss to the melody, aching all through !

SONG

I HAD a dove and the sweet dove died ;
 And I have thought it died of grieving :
 O, what could it grieve for ? Its feet were tied,
 With a silken thread of my own hand's weaving ;
 Sweet little red feet ! why should you die—
 Why should you leave me, sweet bird ! why ?
 You liv'd alone in the forest-tree,
 Why, pretty thing ! would you not live with me ?
 I kiss'd you oft and gave you white peas ;
 Why not live sweetly, as in the green trees ?

ODE ON INDOLENCE

‘They toil not, neither do they spin’

I

ONE morn before me were three figures seen,
With bowed necks, and joined hands, side-fac'd ;
And one behind the other stepp'd serene,
In placid sandals, and in white robes grac'd ;
They passed, like figures on a marble urn,
When shifted round to see the other side ;
They came again ; as when the urn once more
Is shifted round, the first seen shades return ;
And they were strange to me, as may betide
With vases, to one deep in Phidian lore.

II

How is it, Shadows ; that I knew ye not ?
How came ye muffled in so hush a mask ?
Was it a silent, deep-disguised plot
To steal away, and leave without a task
My idle days ? Ripe was the drowsy hour ;
The blissful cloud of summer indolence
Benumb'd my eyes ; my pulse grew less and less ;
Pain had no sting, and pleasure's wreath no flower ;
O, why did ye not melt, and leave my sense
Unhaunted quite of all but—nothingness ?

III

A third time passed they by, and, passing, turn'd
Each one the face a moment whiles to me ;
Then faded, and to follow them I burn'd
And ach'd for wings, because I knew the three ;
The first was a fair Maid, and Love her name ;

The second was Ambition, pale of cheek,
 And ever watchful with fatigued eye ;
 The last, whom I love more, the more of blame
 Is heap'd upon her, maiden most unmeek,—
 I knew to be my demon Poesy.

IV

They faded, and, forsooth ! I wanted wings :
 O folly ! what is Love ? and where is it ?
 And for that poor Ambition ! it springs
 From a man's little heart's short fever-fit ;
 For Poesy !—no, she has not a joy,—
 At least for me,—so sweet as drowsy noons,
 And evenings steep'd in honeyed indolence ;
 O, for an age so shelter'd from annoy,
 That I may never know how change the moons,
 Or hear the voice of busy common-sense !

V

And once more came they by ;—alas ! wherefore ?
 My sleep had been embroider'd with dim dreams ;
 My soul had been a lawn besprinkled o'er
 With flowers, and stirring shades, and baffled
 beams .
 The morn was clouded, but no shower fell,
 Though in her lids hung the sweet tears of May ;
 The open casement press'd a new-leav'd vine,
 Let in the budding warmth and throstle's lay ;
 O Shadows ! 'twas a time to bid farewell !
 Upon your skirts had fallen no tears of mine.

VI

So, ye three Ghosts, adieu ! Ye cannot raise
 My head cool-bedded in the flowery grass ;
 For I would not be dicted with praise,
 A pet-lamb in a sentimental farce !

SONNET

321

Fade softly from my eyes, and be once more
 In masque-like figures on the dreamy urn ;
 Farewell ! I yet have visions for the night ;
 And for the day faint visions there is store ;
 Vanish, ye Phantoms ! from my idle spright,
 Into the clouds, and never more return !

SONNET

THE day is gone, and all its sweets are gone !
 Sweet voice, sweet lips, soft hand, and softer breast,
 Warm breath, light whisper, tender semi-tone,
 Bright eyes, accomplished shape, and lang'rous
 waist,
 Faded the flower and all its budded charms,
 Faded the sight of beauty from my eyes,
 Faded the shape of beauty from my arms,
 Faded the voice, warmth, whiteness, paradise—
 Vanish'd unseasonably at shut of eve,
 When the dusk holiday—or holynight
 Of fragrant-curtained love begins to weave
 The woof of darkness thick, for hid delight ;
 But, as I've read love's missal through to-day,
 He'll let me sleep, seeing I fast and pray.

SONNET

I CRY your mercy—pity—love !—aye, love !
 Merciful love that tantalises not,
 One-thoughted, never-wandering, guileless love,
 Unmask'd, and being seen—without a blot !
 O ! let me have thee whole,—all—all—be mine !
 That shape, that fairness, that sweet minor zest

322 LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

Of love, your kiss,—those hands, those eyes divine,
 That warm, white, lucent, million-pleasured breast,—
 Yourself—your soul—in pity give me all,
 Withhold no atom's atom, or I die,
 Or living on perhaps, your wretched thrall,
 Forget, in the mist of idle misery,
 Life's purposes,—the palate of my mind
 Losing its gust, and my ambition blind !

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

O WHAT can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
 Alone and palely loitering ?
 The sedge has wither'd from the lake,
 And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
 So haggard and so woe-begone ?
 The squirrel's granary is full,
 And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow,
 With anguish moist and fever dew ;
 And on thy cheeks a fading rose,
 Fast withereth too.

I met a lady in the meads,
 Full beautiful—a faery's child ;
 Her hair was long, her foot was light,
 And her eyes were wild.

I made a garland for her head,
 And bracelets too, and fragrant zone ;
 She look'd at me as she did love,
 And made sweet moan.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI 321

I set her on pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long ;
For sidelong would she bend and sing
A faery's song.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild and manna-dew ;
And sure in language strange she said,
' I love thee true.'

She took me to her elfin grot,
' And there she wept and sigh'd full sore ;
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes
With kisses four.

And there she lulled me asleep,
And there I dream'd—Ah ! woe betide !
The latest dream I ever dream'd,
On the cold hill's side.

I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors—death-pale were they all ;
They cried, ' La Belle Dame Sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall !'

I saw their starv'd lips in the gloom,
With horrid warning gap'd wide ;
And I awoke, and found me here
On the cold hill's side.

And this is why I sojourn here,
Alone and palely loitering ;
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

SONNET

Why did I laugh to-night? No voice will tell :
No God, no Demon of severe response,
Deigns to reply from Heaven or from Hell.
Then to my human heart I turn at once.
Heart! Thou and I are here sad and alone ;
I say, Why did I laugh? O mortal pain !
O Darkness! Darkness! ever must I moan,
To question Heaven and Hell and Heart in vain.
Why did I laugh? I know this being's lease,
My fancy to its utmost blisses spreads ;
Yet would I on this very midnight cease,
And the world's gaudy ensigns see in shreds ;
Verse, Fame, and Beauty are intense indeed,
But Death intenser—Death is Life's high meed

SPENSERIAN STANZAS ON CHARLES
ARMITAGE BROWN

He is to weet a melancholy carle :
Thin in the waist, with bushy head of hair,
As hath the seeded thistle, when a parle
It holds the Zephyr, ere it sendeth fair
Its light balloons into the summer air ;
Thereto his beard had not begun to bloom,
- No brush had touch'd his chin or razor sheer ;
No care had touch'd his cheek with mortal doom.
But new he was, and bright as scarf from Persian
loom.

SONNET ON A DREAM

32

Ne cared he for wine, or half-and-half;
 Ne cared he for fish or flesh or fowl,
 And sauces held he worthless as the chaff;
 He 'sdained the swine-head at the wassail-bowl;
 Ne with lewd ribbalds sat he cheek by jowl;
 Ne with sly lemans in the scorner's chair;
 But after water-brooks this pulgrim's soul
 Panted, and all his food was woodland air
 Though he would oft-times feast on gulliflowers rare.

The slang of cities in no wise he knew,
Tipping the wink to him was heathen Greek;
 He sipped no 'olden Tom,' or 'ruin blue,'
 Or Nantz or cherry-brandy, drank full meek
 By many a damsel hoarse and rouge of cheek;
 Nor did he know each aged watchman's beat,
 Nor in obscured purlieus would he seek
 For curled Jewesses, with ankles neat,
 Who as they walk abroad make tinkling with their
 feet.

SONNET ON A DREAM

AFTER READING DANTE'S EPISODE OF PAULO AND
 FRANCESCA

['I dreamt of being in that region of hell (wherein are Paulo and Francesca). I floated about the wheeling atmosphere with a beautiful figure, to whose lips mine were joined, it seemed for an age; and in the midst of all this cold and darkness, I was warm. I tried a sonnet on it, there are fourteen lines in it, but nothing of what I felt.'—*Letter to his brother in America.*]

As Hermes once took to his feathers light,
 When lulled Argus, baffled, swoon'd and slept,
 So on a Delphic reed, my idle spright
 So play'd, so charm'd, so-conquer'd, so bereft
 The dragon-world of all its hundred eyes:
 And, seeing it asleep, so fled away,—

SONG OF FOUR FAERIES

Not to pure Ida with its snow-cold skies,
 Nor unto Tempe where Jove griev'd a day ;
 But to that second circle of sad hell,
 Where 'mid the gust, the whirlwind, and the flaw
 Of rain and hailstones, lovers need not tell
 Their sorrows Pale were the sweet lips I saw,
 Pale were the lips I kiss'd, and fair the form
 I floated with, about that melancholy storm.

SONG OF FOUR FAERIES,

FIRE, AIR, EARTH, AND WATER,

SALAMANDER, ZEPHYR, DUSKETHA, AND BREAMA

Salamander. HAPPY, happy glowing fire !

Zephyr. Fragrant air ! delicious light !

Dusketha. Let me to my glooms retire !

Breama. I to green-weed rivers bright !

Salamander. Happy, happy glowing fire !

Dazzling bowers of soft retire,

Ever let my nourish'd wing,

Like a bat's, still wandering,

Faintless fan your fiery spaces,

Spirit sole in deadly places.

In unhaunted roar and blaze,

Open eyes that never daze,

Let me see the myriad shapes

Of men, and beasts, and fish, and apes,

Portray'd in many a fiery den,

And wrought by spumy bitumen.

On the deep intenser roof,

Arched every way aloof.

Let me breathe upon their skies,

And anger their live tapestries ;

- Free from cold, and every care,
Of chilly rain, and shivering air.
- Zephyr.* Spirit of Fire—away ! away !
Or your very roundelay
Will sear my plumage newly budded
From its quilled sheath, all studded
With the self-same dew that fell
In the May-grown Asphodel.
Spirit of fire—away ! away !
- Breama.* Spirit of Fire—away ! away !
Zephyr, blue-eyed Faery, turn,
And see my cool sedge-buried urn,
Where it rests its mossy brim
'Mid water-mint and cresses dim ;
And the flowers, in sweet troubles,
Lift their eyes above the bubbles,
Like our Queen, when she would please
To sleep, and Oberon *will* tease.
Love me, blue-eyed Faery, true !
Soothly I am sick for you
- Zephyr.* Gentle Breama ! by the first
Violet young nature nurst,
I will bathe myself with thee,
So you sometimes follow me
To my home, far, far, in west,
Beyond the nimble-wheeled quest
Of the golden-browed sun :
Come with me, o'er tops of trees,
To my fragrant palaces,
Where they ever floating are
Beneath the cherish of a star
Call'd Vesper, who with silver veil
Ever hides his brilliance pale,
Ever gently-drows'd doth keep
Twilight for the Fayes to sleep.
Fear not that your watery hair
Will thirst in drouthy ringlets there ;
Clouds of stored summer rains
Thou shalt taste, before the stains

Of the mountain soil they take,
 And too unlucent for thee make.
 I love thee, crystal Faery, true !
 Sooth I am as sick for you !

Salamander. Out, ye aguish Faeries, out !
 Chilly lovers, what a rout
 Keep ye with your frozen breath,
 Colder than the mortal death.
 Adder-eyed Dusketha, speak,
 Shall we leave these, and go seek
 In the earth's wide entrails old
 Couches warm as their's are cold ?
 O for a fiery gloom and thee,
 Dusketha, so enchantingly
 Freckled-wing'd and lizard-sided !

Dusketha By thee, Sprite, will I be guided
 I care not for cold or heat ;
 Frost and flame, or sparks, or sleet,
 To my essence are the same ;—
 But I honour more the flame.
 Sprite of Fire, I follow thee
 Wheresoever it may be,
 To the torrid spouts and fountains,
 Underneath earthquaked mountains ;
 Or, at thy supreme desire,
 Touch the very pulse of fire
 With my bare unlidde eyes.

Salamander. Sweet Dusketha ! paradise !
 Off, ye icy Spirits, fly !
 Frosty creatures of the sky !

Dusketha. Breathe upon them, fiery Sprite !

Zephyr and Breama. Away ! away to our delight !

Salamander. Go, feed on icicles, while we
 Bedded in tongue-flames will be.

Dusketha. Lead me to those feverous glooms,
 Sprite of Fire !

Breama Me to the blooms,
 Blue-eyed Zephyr, of those flowers
 Far in the west where the May-cloud lowers ;

SONNET

But the rose leaves herself upon the brier,
 For winds to kiss and grateful bees to feed,
 And the ripe plum still wears its dim attire,
 The undisturbed lake has crystal space,
 Why then should man, teasing the world for
 grace,
 Spoil his salvation for a fierce miscreed ?

SONNET

ON THE SONNET

Ir by dull rhymes our English must be chain'd,
 And, like Andromeda, the Sonnet sweet
 Fetter'd, in spite of pained loveliness,
 Let us find out, if we must be constrain'd,
 Sandals more interwoven and complete
 To fit the naked foot of poesy ;
 Let us inspect the lyre, and weigh the stress
 Of every chord, and see what may be gain'd
 By ear industrious, and attention meet ;
 Misers of sound and syllable, no less
 Than Midas of his coinage, let us be
 Jealous of dead leaves in the bay-wreath crown ;
 So, if we may not let the Muse be free,
 She will be bound with garlands of her own. ♦

FRAGMENT

WHERE's the Poet ? show him ! show him !
 Muses nine ! that I may know him !
 'Tis the man who with a man
 Is an equal, be he King,
 Or poorest of the beggar-clan,
 Or any other wondrous thing

A man may be 'twixt ape and Plato ;
'Tis the man who with a bird,
Wren, or Eagle, finds his way to
All its instincts ; he hath heard
The Lion's roaring, and can tell
What his horny throat expresseth ;
And to him the Tiger's yell
Comes articulate and presseth
On his ear like mother-tongue.

MODERN LOVE

AND what is love ? It is a doll dress'd up
For idleness to cosset, nurse, and dandle ;
A thing of soft misnomers, so divine
That silly youth doth think to make itself
Divine by loving, and so goes on
Yawning and doting a whole summer long,
Till Miss's comb is made a pearl tiara,
And common Wellingtons turn Romeo boots
Then Cleopatra lives at number seven,
And Antony resides in Brunswick Square.
Fools ! if some passions high have warm'd the world,
If Queens and Soldiers have play'd deep for hearts,
It is no reason why such agonies
Should be more common than the growth of weeds.
Fools ! make me whole again that weighty pearl
The Queen of Egypt melted, and I'll say
That ye may love in spite of beaver hats.

FRAGMENT OF 'THE CASTLE
BUILDER'

TO-NIGHT I'll have my friar—let me think
 About my room,—I'll have it in the pink ;
 It should be rich and sombre, and the moon,
 Just in its mid-life in the midst of June,
 Should look thro' four large windows and display
 Clear, but for goldfish vases in the way,
 Their glassy diamonding on Turkish floor ;
 The tapers keep aside, an hour and more,
 To see what else the moon alone can show ;
 While the night-breeze doth softly let us know
 My terrace is well-bower'd with oranges.
 Upon the floor the dullest spirit sees
 A guitar-ribband and a lady's glove
 Beside a crumple-leaved tale of love ;
 A tambour-frame, with Venus sleeping there,
 All finish'd but some ringlets of her hair ;
 A viol, bow-strings torn, crosswise upon
 A glorious folio of Anacreon ;
 A skull upon a mat of roses lying,
 Ink'd purple with a song concerning dying ;
 An hour-glass on the turn, amid the trails
 Of passion-flower ;—just in time there sails
 A cloud across the moon,—the lights bring in !
 And see what more my phantasy can win
 It is a gorgeous room, but somewhat sad ;
 The draperies are so, as tho' they had
 Been made for Cleopatra's winding-sheet ;
 And opposite the steadfast eye doth meet
 A spacious looking-glass, upon whose face,
 In letters raven-sombre, you may trace

Old 'Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.'
 Greek busts and statuary have ever been
 Held, by the finest spirits, fitter far
 Than vase grotesque and Siamesian jar ;
 Therefore 'tis sure a want of Attic taste
 That I should rather love a Gothic waste
 Of eyesight on cinque-coloured potter's clay,
 Than on the marble fairness of old Greece.
 My table-coverlets of Jason's fleece
 And black Numidian sheep-wool should be wrought,
 Gold, black, and heavy, from the Llamā brought.
 My ebon sofas should delicious be
 With down from Leda's cygnet progeny.
 My pictures all Salvator's, save a few
 Of Titian's portraiture, and one, though new,
 Of Haydon's in its fresh magnificence.
 My wine—O good ! 'tis here at my desire,
 And I must sit to supper with my friar.

TO —

WHAT can I do to drive away
 Remembrance from my eyes ? for they have seen
 Ay, an hour ago, my brilliant Queen !
 Touch has a memory. O say, love, say,
 What can I do to kill it and be free
 In my old liberty ?
 When every fair one that I saw was fair,
 Enough to catch me in but half a snare,
 Not keep me there
 When, how'er poor or particolour'd things,
 My muse had wings,
 And ever ready was to take her course
 Whither I bent her force,

Let once again these aching arms be placed,
The tender gaolers of thy waist !
And let me feel that warm breath here and there
To spread a rapture in my very hair,—
O, the sweetness of the pain !
Give me those lips again !
Enough ! Enough ! it is enough for me
To dream of thee !

LAST SONNET

BRIGHT star ! would I were steadfast as thou art—
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite.
The moving waters at their priest-like task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask—
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—
No—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

THE FALL OF HYPERION

A VISION

CANTO I

FANATICS have their dreams, wherewith they weave
A paradise for a sect ; the savage, too,
From forth the loftiest fashion of his sleep
Guesses at heaven ; pity these have not
Traced upon vellum or wild Indian leaf
The shadows of melodious utterance,
But bare of laurel they live, dream, and die ;
For Poesy alone can tell her dreams,—
With the fine spell of words alone can save
Imagination from the syle chain
And dumb enchantment Who alive can say,
'Thou art no Poet—may'st not tell thy dreams?'
Since every man whose soul is not a clod
Hath visions and would speak, if he had loved,
And been well nurtured in his mother tongue
Whether the dream now purposed to rehearse
Be poet's or fanatic's will be known
When this warm scribe, my hand, is in the grave.

Methought I stood where trees of every clime,
Palm, myrtle, oak, and sycamore, and beech,
With plantane, and spice-blossoms, made a screen,
In neighbourhood of fountains (by the noise
Soft-showering in my ears), and (by the touch
Of scent) not far from roses. Twining round
I saw an arbour with a drooping roof
Of trellis vines, and bells, and larger blooms,
Like floral censers, swinging light in air ;

Before its wreathed doorway, on a mound
Of moss, was spread a feast of summer fruits,
Which, nearer seen, seem'd refuse of a meal
By angel tasted or our Mother Eve ;
For empty shells were scattered on the grass,
And grape-stalks but half bare, and remnants more
Sweet-smelling, whose pure kinds I could not know.
Still was more plenty than the fabled horn
Thrice emptied could pour forth at banqueting,
For Proserpine return'd to her own fields,
Where the white heifers low. And appetite
More yearning than on earth I ever felt,
Growing within, I ate deliciously,—
And, after not long, thirsted ; for thereby
Stood a cool vessel of transparent juice
Sipp'd by the wander'd bee, the which I took,
And pledging all the mortals of the world,
And all the dead whose names are in our lips,
Drank. That full draught is parent of my theme.
No Asian poppy nor elixir fine
Of the soon-fading, jealous, Caliphat,
No poison gender'd in close monkish cell,
To thin the scarlet conclave of old men,
Could so have rapt unwilling life away.
Among the fragrant busks and berries crush'd
Upon the grass, I struggled hard against
The domineering potion, but in vain.
The cloudy swoon came on, and down I sank,
Like a Silenus on an antique vase.
How long I slumber'd 'tis a chance to guess.
When sense of life return'd, I started up
As if with wings, but the fair trees were gone,
The mossy mound and arbour were no more :
I look'd around upon the curved sides
Of an old sanctuary, with roof august,
Built so high, it seem'd that filmed clouds
Might spread beneath as o'er the stars of heaven.
So old the place was, I remember'd none

The like upon the earth · what I had seen
Of gray cathedrals, buttress'd walls, rent towers,
The superannuations of sunk realms,
Or Nature's rocks toil'd hard in waves and winds,
Seem'd but the faulture of decrepit things
To that eternal domed monument.

Upon the marble at my feet there lay
Store of strange vessels and large draperies,
Which needs had been of dyed asbestos wove,
Or in that place the moth could not corrupt,
So white the linen, so, in some, distinct
Ran imageries from a sombre loom.
All in a mingled heap confused there lay
Robes, golden tongs, censer and chafing-dish,
Girdles, and chains, and holy jewelries

Turning from these with awe, once more I raised
My eyes to fathom the space every way :
The embossed roof, the silent massy range
Of columns north and south, ending in mist
Of nothing ; then to eastward, where black gates
Were shut against the sunrise evermore ;
Then to the west I look'd, and saw far off
An image, huge of feature as a cloud,
At level of whose feet an altar slept,
To be approach'd on either side by steps
And marble balustrade, and patient travail
To count with toil the innumerable degrees.
Towards the altar sober-paced I went,
Repressing haste as too unholy there ;
And, coming nearer, saw beside the shrine
One ministering ; and there arose a flame.
When in mid-day the sickening east wind
Shifts sudden to the south, the small warm rain
Melts out the frozen incense from all flowers,
And fills the air with so much pleasant health ,
That even the dying man forgets his shroud ;—
Even so that lofty sacrificial fire,

Sending forth Maian incense, spread around
 Forgetfulness of everything but bliss,
 And clouded all the altar with soft smoke ;
 From whose white fragrant curtains thus I heard
 Language pronounced : ' If thou canst not ascend
 ' These steps, die on that marble where thou art
 ' Thy flesh, near cousin to the common dust,
 ' Will parch for lack of nutriment ; thy bones
 ' Will wither in few years, and vanish so
 ' That not the quickest eye could find a grain
 ' Of what thou now art on that pavement cold.
 ' The sands of thy short life are spent this hour,
 ' And no hand in the universe can turn
 ' Thy hourglass, if these gummed leaves be burnt
 ' Ere thou canst mount up these immortal steps.'
 I heard, I look'd - two senses both at once,
 So fine, so subtle, felt the tyranny
 Of that fierce threat and the hard task proposed.
 Prodigious seem'd the toil ; the leaves were yet
 Burning, when suddenly a palsied chill
 Struck from the paved level up my limbs,
 And was ascending quick to put cold grasp
 Upon those streams that pulse beside the throat.
 I shriek'd, and the sharp anguish of my shriek
 Stung my own ears ; I strove hard to escape
 The numbness ; strove to gain the lowest step.
 Slow, heavy, deadly was my pace : the cold
 Grew stifling, suffocating at the heart ;
 And when I clasp'd my hands I felt them not
 One minute before death, my iced foot touch'd
 The lowest stair ; and as it touch'd, life seem'd
 To pour in at the toes : I mounted up
 As once fair angels on a ladder flew
 From the green turf to heaven - ' Holy Power,'
 Cried I, approaching near the horned shrine,
 ' What art thou that should so be saved from death ?
 ' What art thou that another death come not
 ' To choke my intruder's writhing, here ?'

Then said the veiled shadow : 'Thou hast felt
'What 'tis to die and live again before
'Thy fated hour ; that thou hadst power to do so
'Is thine own safety ; thou hast dated on
'Thy doom.' 'High Prophetess,' said I, 'purge off,
'Benign, if so it please thee, my mind's film.'
'None can usurp this height,' return'd that shade,
'But those to whom the miseries of the world
'Are misery, and will not let them rest.
'All else who find a haven in the world,
'Where they may thoughtless sleep away their days,
'If by a chance into this fane they come,
'Rot on the pavement where thou rottedst half.'
'Are there not thousands in the world,' said I,
Encouraged by the sooth voice of the shade,
'Who love their fellows even to the death,
'Who feel the giant agony of the world,
'And more, like slaves to poor humanity,
'Labour for mortal good? I sure should see
'Other men here, but I am here alone.'
'Those whom thou spakest of are no visionaries,'
Rejoin'd that voice ; 'they are no dreamers weak ;
'They seek no wonder but the human face,
'No music but a happy-noted voice :
'They come not here, they have no thought to come ;
'And thou art here, for thou art less than they.
'What benefit canst thou do, or all thy tribe,
'To the great world? Thou art a dreaming thing,
'A fever of thyself ; think of the earth ;
'What bliss, even in hope, is there for thee ?
'What haven? every creature hath its home,
'Every sole man hath days of joy and pain,
'Whether his labours be sublime or low—
'The pain alone, the joy alone, distinct :
'Only the dreamer venoms all his days,
'Bearing more woe than all his sins deserve.
'Therefore, that happiness be somewhat shared,
'Such things as thou art are admitted oft

' Into like gardens thou didst pass erewhile,
' And suffer'd in these temples : for that cause
' Thou standest safe beneath this statue's knees.'
' That I am favour'd for unworthiness,
' By such propitious parley medicined
' In sickness not ignoble, I rejoice,
' Ay, and could weep for love of such award.'
So answer'd I, continuing, ' If it please,
' Majestic shadow, tell me where I am,
' Whose altar this, for whom this incense curls ;
' What image this whose face I cannot see,
' For the broad marble knees ; and who thou art,
' Of accent-feminine so courteous ?'

Then the tall shade, in drooping linen veil'd,
Spoke out, so much more earnest, that her breath
Stirr'd the thin folds of gauze that drooping hung
About a golden censer from her hand
Pendent ; and by her voice I knew she shed
Long-treasured tears. " This temple, sad and lone,
' Is all spared from the thunder of a war
' Foughten long since by giant hierarchy
' Against rebellion - this old image here,
' Whose carved features wrinkled as he fell,
' Is Saturn's ; I, Moneta, left supreme,
' Sole Priestess of this desolation.'
I had no words to answer, for my tongue,
Useless, could find about its roofed home
No syllable of a fit majesty
To make rejoinder to Moneta's mourn :
There was a silence, while the altar's blaze
Was fainting for sweet food. I look'd thereon,
And on the paved floor, where nigh were piled
Faggots of cinnamon, and many heaps
Of other crisped spicewood : then again
I look'd upon the altar, and its horns
Whiten'd with ashes, and its languorous flame,
And then upon the offerings again ;

And so, by turns, till sad Moneta cried :
‘The sacrifice is done, but not the less
‘Will I be kind to thee for thy good will.
‘My power, which to me is still a curse,
‘Shall be to thee a wonder ; for the scenes
‘Still swooning vivid through my globed brain,
‘With an electral changing misery,
‘Thou shalt with these dull mortal eyes behold,
‘Free from all pain, if wonder pain thee not.’
As near as an immortal’s sphered words
Could to a mother’s soften were these last :
And yet I had a terror of her robes,
And chiefly of the veils that from her brow
Hung pale, and curtain’d her in mysteries,
That made my heart too small to hold its blood.
This saw that Goddess, and with sacred hand
Parted the veils Then saw I a wan face,
Not pin’d by human sorrows, but bright-blanch’d
By an immortal sickness which kills not,
It works a constant change, which happy death
Can put no end to ; deathwards progressing
To no death was that visage ; it had past
The lily and the snow ; and beyond these
I must not think now, though I saw that face.
But for her eyes I should have fled away ;
They held me back with a benignant light,
Soft, mitigated by divinest lids.
Half-closed, and visionless entire they seem’d
Of all external things, they saw me not,
But in blank splendour beam’d, like the mild moon,
Who comforts those she sees not, who knows not
What eyes are upward cast As I had found
A grain of gold upon a mountain’s side,
And, twing’d with avarice, strain’d out my eyes
To search its sullen entrails rich with ore,
So, at the view of sad Moneta’s brow,
I asked to see what things the hollow brow
Behind environed what high tragedy

In the dark secret chambers of her skull
Was acting, that could give so dread a stress
To her cold lips, and fill with such a light
Her planetary eyes, and touch her voice
With such a sorrow? 'Shade of Memory!'
Cried I, with act adorant at her feet,
'By all the gloom hung round thy fallen house,
'By this last temple, by the golden age,
'By great Apollo, thy dear foster-child,
'And by thyself, forlorn divinity,
'The pale Omega of a withered race,
'Let me behold, according as thou saidst,
'What in thy brain so ferments to and fro!'
No sooner had this conjuration past
My devout lips, than side by side we stood
(Like a stunt bramble by a solemn pine)
Deep in the shady sadness of a vale,
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn.
Far from the fiery noon and eve's one star.
Onward I look'd beneath the gloomy boughs,
And saw what first I thought an image huge,
Like to the image pedestal'd so high
In Saturn's temple; then Moneta's voice
Came brief upon mine ear. 'So Saturn sat
When he had lost his realms—' whereon there grew
A power within me of enormous ken
To see as a god sees, and take the depth
Of things as nimbly as the outward eye
Can size and shape pervade. The lofty theme
Of those few words hung vast before my mind,
With half-unravell'd web I sat myself
Upon an eagle's watch, that I might see,
And seeing ne'er forget. No stir of life
Was in this shrouded vale, not so much air
As in the zoning of a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass;
But where the dead leaf fell there did it rest
A stream went noiseless by, still deaden'd more

By reason of the fallen divinity
Spreading more shade ; the Naiad 'mid her reeds
Prest her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large footmarks went
No further than to where old Saturn's feet
Had rested, and there slept, how long a sleep !
Degraded, cold, upon the sodden ground
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
Unsculptured, and his realmless eyes were closed ;
While his bow'd head seem'd listening to the earth,
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seem'd no force could wake him from his place ;
But there came one who, with a kindred hand
Touch'd his wide shoulders, after bending low
With reverence, though to one who knew it not.
Then came the griev'd voice of Mnemosyne,
And griev'd I hearken'd. ' That divinity
' Whom thou saw'st step from yon forlornest wood,
' And with slow pace approach our fallen king,
' Is Thea, softest-natur'd of our brood.'
I mark'd the Goddess, in fair statuary
Surpassing wan Moneta by the head,
And in her sorrow nearer woman's tears.
There was a listening fear in her regard,
As if calamity had but begun ,
As if the venom'd clouds of evil days
Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
Was with its stored thunder labouring up
One hand she press'd upon that aching spot
Where beats the human heart, as if just there,
Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain ;
The other upon Saturn's bended neck
She laid, and to the level of his ear
Leaning, with parted lips some words she spoke
In solemn tenour and deep organ-tone ;
Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue



OLD MFG

'With ner fingers, old and brown,
She plantid mats o' rushes.'

Would come in this like accenting ; how frail
To that large utterance of the early gods !

' Saturn ! look up ! and for what, poor lost king ?
' I have no comfort for thee ; no, not one,
' I cannot say, wherefore thus sleepest thou ?
' For Heaven is parted from thee, and the Earth
' Knows thee not, so afflicted, for a god.
' The Ocean, too, with all its solemn noise,
' Has from thy sceptre pass'd ; and all the air
' Is emptied of thy hoary majesty.
' Thy thunder, captious at the new command,
' Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house ;
' And thy sharp lightning, in unpracticed hands,
' Scourges and burns our once serene domain.

' With such remorseless speed still come new woes !
' That unbelief has not a space to breathe.
' Saturn ! sleep on : me thoughtless, why should I
' Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude ?
' Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes ?
' Saturn ! sleep on, while at thy feet I weep.'

As when upon a tranced summer-night
Forests, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,
Dream, and so dream all night without a noise,
Save from one gradual solitary gust,
Swelling upon the silence, dying off,
As if the ebbing air had but one wave ;
So came these words, and went ; the while in tears
She prest her fair large forehead to the earth,
Just where her fallen hair might spread in curls,
A soft and silken net for Saturn's feet.
Long, long these two were postured motionless,
Like sculpture builded-up upon the grave
Of their own power. A long awful time
I look'd upon them : still they were the same ;
The frozen God still bending to the earth,

And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet,
 Moneta silent Without stay or prop,
 But my own weak mortality, I bore
 The load of this eternal quietude.
 The unchanging gloom, and the three fixed shapes
 Ponderous upon my senses, a whole moon ;
 For by my burning brain I measured sure
 Her silver seasons shedded on the night,
 And every day by day methought I grew
 More gaunt and ghostly. Oftentimes I pray'd
 Intense, that death would take me from the vale
 And all its burthens ; gasping with despair
 Of change, hour after hour I curs'd myself,
 Until old Saturn rais'd his faded eyes,
 And look'd around and saw his kingdom gone,
 And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,
 And that fair kneeling Goddess at his feet.

As the moist scent of flowers, and grass, and leaves,
 Fills forest-dells with a pervading air,
 Known to the woodland nostril, so the words
 Of Saturn fill'd the mossy glooms around,
 Even to the hollows of time-eaten oaks,
 And to the windings of the foxes' hole,
 With sad, low tones, while thus he spoke, and sent
 Strange moanings to the solitary Pan.
 'Moan, brethren, moan ; for we are swallow'd up
 'And buried from all Godlike exercise
 'Of influence benign on planets pale,
 'And peaceful sway upon man's harvesting,
 'And all those acts which Deity supreme
 'Doth ease its heart of love in. Moan and wail ;
 'Moan, brethren, moan ; for lo, the rebel spheres
 'Spin round ; the stars their ancient courses keep,
 'Clouds still with shadowy moisture haunt the earth,
 'Still suck their fill of light from sun and moon ;
 'Still buds the tree, and still the seashores murmur ;
 'There is no death in all the Universe,

'No smell of death. There shall be death. Moan,
moan ;
'Moan, Cybele, moan ; for thy pernicious babes
'Have changed a god into an aching palsy.
'Moan, brethren, moan, for I have no strength left ;
'Weak as the reed, weak, feeble as my voice.
'Oh ! Oh ! the pain, the pain of feebleness ;
'Moan, moan, for still I thaw ; or give me help ;
'Throw down those imps, and give me victory.
'Let me hear other groans, and trumpets blown
'Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival,
'From the gold peaks of Heaven's high-piled clouds ;
'Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir
'Of strings in hollow shells ; and there shall be
'Beautiful things made new, for the surprise
'Of the sky-children.' So he feebly ceased,
With such a poor and sickly-sounding pause,
Methought I heard some old man of the earth
Bewailing earthly loss ; nor could my eyes
And ears act with that unison of sense
Which marries sweet sound with the grace of form,
And dolorous accent from a tragic harp
With large-limb'd visions. More I scrutinised :
Still fixt he sat beneath the sable trees,
Whose arms spread straggling in wild serpent forms,
With leaves all hush'd ; his awful presence there
(Now all was silent) gave a deadly lie
To what I erewhile heard only his lips
Trembled amid the white curls of his beard ;
They told the truth, though round the snowy locks
Hung nobly, as upon the face of heaven
A mid-day fleece of clouds. Thea arose,
And stretcht her white arm through the hollow dark,
Pointing some whither : whereat he too rose,
Like a vast giant, seen by men at sea
To grow pale from the waves at dull midnight.
They melted from my sight into the woods ;
Ere I could turn, Moneta cried, 'These twain

'Are speeding to the families of grief,
 'Where rooft in by black rocks they waste, in pain
 'And darkness, for no hope.'—And she spake on,
 As ye may read who can unwearied pass
 Onward from the Antechamber of this dream,
 Where, even at the open doors, awhile
 I must delay, and glean my memory
 Of her high phrase—perhaps no further dare.

END OF CANTO I

CANTO II

'MORTAL, that thou mayst understand aright,
 'I humanise my sayings to thine ear,
 'Making comparisons of earthly things ;
 'Or thou mightst better listen to the wind,
 'Whose language is to thee a barren noise,
 'Though it blows legend-laden thro' the trées.
 'In melancholy realms big tears are shed,
 'More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,
 'Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe.
 'The Titans fierce, self hid or prison-bound,
 'Groan for the old allegiance once more,
 'Listening in their doom for Saturn's voice.
 'But one of the whole eagle-brood still keeps
 'His sov'reignty, and rule, and majesty :
 'Blazing Hyperion on his orbéd fire
 'Still sits, still snuffs the incense teeming up
 'From Man to the Sun's God—yet insecure.
 'For as upon the earth dire prodigies
 'Fright and perplex, so also shudders he ;
 'Nor at dog's howl or gloom-bird's hated screech,
 'Or the familiar visiting of one
 'Upon the first toll of his passing bell,
 'Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp.
 'But horrors, portioned to a giant nerve,

' Make great Hyperion ache His palace bright,
' Bastioned with pyramids of shining gold,
' And touched with shade of bronzed obelisks,
' Glares a blood-red thro' all the thousand courts,
' Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries;
' And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds -
' Flash angrily ; when he would taste the wreaths
' Of incense breathed aloft from sacred hills
' Instead of sweets, his ample palate takes
' Savour of poisonous brass and metals sick ;
' Wherefore when harbour'd in the sleepy West,
' After the full completion of fair day,
' For rest divine upon exalted couch
' And slumber in the arms of melody,
' He paces through the pleasant hours of ease,
' With strides colossal, on from hall to hall,
' While far within each aisle and deep-recess
' His winged minions in close clusters stand
' Amazed, and full of fear ; like anxious men,
' Who on a wide plain gather in sad troops,
' When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers.
' Even now where Saturn, roused from icy trance,
' Goes step for step with Thea from yon woods,
' Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,
' Is sloping to the threshold of the West.
' Thither we tend.'—Now in clear light I stood,
Reliev'd from the dusk vale. Mnemosyne
Was sitting on a square-edged polish'd stone,
That in its lucid depth reflected pure
Her priestess'-garments. My quick eyes ran on
From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,
Through bow'rs of fragrant and enwreathed light,
And diamond-paned lustrous long arcades.
Anon rush'd by the bright Hyperion :
His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,
And gave a roar as if of earthly fire,
That scared away the meek ethereal hours,
And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared.

OTHO THE GREAT

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

OTHO THE GREAT, <i>Emperor of Germany</i>	ETHELBERT, <i>an Abbot</i>
LUDOLPH, <i>his Son</i>	GERSA, <i>Prince of Hungary.</i>
CONRAD, <i>Duke of Franconia</i>	<i>An Hungarian Captain.</i>
ALBERT, <i>a Knight, favoured by Otho.</i>	<i>Physician.</i>
SIGIFRED, <i>an Officer, friend of Ludolph.</i>	<i>Page.</i>
THEODORE, } <i>Officers.</i>	<i>Nobles, Knights, Attendants,</i>
GONFRED, }	<i>and Soldiers</i>
	ERMINIA, <i>Niece of Otho</i>
	AURANTHE, <i>Conrad's Sister.</i>
	<i>Ladies and Attendants</i>

SCENE. *The Castle of Friedburg, its vicinity, and the Hungarian Camp.*

TIME *One Day.*

ACT I

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Castle. Enter CONRAD*

Conrad. So, I am safe emerged from these broils !
 Amid the wreck of thousands I am whole ;
 For every crime I have a laurel-wreath,
 For every lie a lordship. Nor yet has
 My ship of fortune furl'd her silken sails,—
 Let her glide on ! This danger'd neck is saved,
 By dexterous policy, from the rebels' axe ;
 And of my ducal palace not one stone
 Is bruised by the Hungarian petards
 Toil hard, ye slaves, and from the miser-earth
 Bring forth once more my bullion, treasured deep
 With all my jewell'd salvers, silver and gold,

And precious goblets that make rich the wine.
But why do I stand babbling to myself?
Where is Auranthe? I have news for her.
Shall——

Enter AURANTHE

Auranthe. Conrad! what tidings? Good, if-I may guess

From your alert eyes and high-lifted brows.
What tidings of the battle? Albert? Ludolph? Otho?

Conrad. You guess aright And, sister, slurring o'er
Our bygone quarrels, I confess my heart
Is beating with a child's anxiety,
To make our golden fortune known to you.

Auranthe. So serious?

Conrad. Yes, so serious, that before
I utter even the shadow of a hint
Concerning what will make that sin-worn cheek
Blush joyous blood through every lineament,
You must make here a solemn vow to me.

Auranthe. I prythee, Conrad, do not overact
The hypocrite. What vow would you impose?

Conrad. Trust me for once. That you may be assured
'Tis not confiding to a broken reed,
A poor court-bankrupt, outwitted and lost,
Revolve these facts in your acutest mood,
In such a mood as now you listen to me:
A few days since, I was an open rebel,—
Against the emperor, had suborn'd his son,
Drawn off his nobles to revolt, and shown
Contented fools causes for discontent,
Fresh hatch'd in my ambition's eagle-nest;
So thriv'd I as a rebel, and, behold!
Now I am Otho's favourite, his dear friend,
His right hand, his brave Conrad.

Auranthe. I confess
You have intrigued with these unsteady times
To admiration; but to be a favourite——

That camp-mushroom—dishonour of our house.
Go, page his dusty heels upon a march,
Furbish his jingling baldrick while he sleeps,
And share his mouldy ration in a siege.
Yet stay,—perhaps a charm may call you back,
And make the widening circlets of your eyes
Sparkle with healthy fevers.—The emperor
Hath given consent that you should marry Ludolph !

Auranthe. Can it be, brother ? For a golden
crown

With a queen's awful lips I doubly thank you !
This is to wake in Paradise ! Farewell
Thou clod of yesterday—'twas not myself !
Not till this moment did I ever feel
My spirit's faculties ! I'll flatter you
For this, and be you ever proud of it ;
Thou, Jove-like, struck'st thy forehead,
And from the teeming marrow of thy brain
I spring complete Minerva ! But the prince—
His highness Ludolph—where is he ?

Conrad.

I know not :

When, lackeying my counsel at a beck,
The rebel lords, on bended knees, received
The emperor's pardon, Ludolph kept aloof,
Sole, in a stiff, fool-hardy, sulky pride ;
Yet, for all this, I never saw a father
In such a sickly longing for his son.
We shall soon see him, for the emperor
He will be here this morning.

Auranthe.

That I heard

Among the midnight rumours from the camp.

Conrad. You give up Albert to me ?

Auranthe.

Harm him not !

E'en for his highness Ludolph's sceptry hand,
I would not Albert suffer any wrong.

Conrad. Have I not laboured, plotted——?

Auranthe

See you spare him :

Nor be pathetic, my kind benefactor,

On all the many bounties of your hand,—
 'Twas for yourself you laboured—not for me !
 Do you not count, when I am queen, to take
 Advantage of your chance discoveries
 Of my poor secrets, and so hold a rod
 Over my life ?

Conrad. Let not this slave—this villain—
 Be cause of feud between us. See ! he comes !
 Look, woman, look, your Albert is quite safe !
 In haste it seems. Now shall I be in the way,
 And wish'd with silent curses in my grave,
 Or side by side with 'whelmed mariners.

Enter ALBERT

Albert. Fair on your graces fall this early morrow !
 So it is like to do, without my prayers,
 For your right noble names, like favourite tunes,
 Have fall'n full frequent from our emperor's lips,
 High commented with smiles.

Auranthe

Noble Albert !

Conrad (aside).

Noble !

Auranthe. Such salutation argues a glad heart
 In our prosperity. We thank you, sir.

Albert. Lady ! O, would to Heaven your poor
 servant

Could do you better service than mere words !
 But I have other greeting than mine own,
 From no less man than Otho, who has sent
 This ring as pledge of dearest amity ;
 'Tis chosen I hear from Hymen's jewelry,
 And you will prize it, lady, I doubt not,
 Beyond all pleasures past, and all to come.
 To you, great duke——

Conrad. To me ! What of me, ha ?

Albert. What pleas'd your grace to say ?

Conrad. Your message, sir !

Albert. You mean not this to me ?

Conrad. Sister, this way ;
For there shall be no 'gentle Alberts' now, [*Aside.*
No 'sweet Auranthes' !

[*Exeunt CONRAD and AURANTHE.*

Albert (solus). The duke is out of temper ; if he knows
More than a brother of a sister ought,
I should not quarrel with his peevishness.
Auranthe—Heaven preserve her always fair !—
Is in the heady, proud, ambitious vein ;
I bicker not with her,—bid her farewell !
She has taken flight from me, then let her soar,—
He is a fool who stands at pining gaze !
But for poor Ludolph, he is food for sorrow :
No levelling bluster of my licens'd thoughts,
No military swagger of my mind,
Can smother from myself the wrong I've done him,—
Without design, indeed,—yet it is so,—
And opiate for the conscience have I none ! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The Courtyard of the Castle*

Marchal Music. Enter, from the outer gate, OTHO, Nobles, Knights, and Attendants. The Soldiers halt at the gate, with Banners in sight.

Otho. Where is my noble herald ?

Enter CONRAD, from the Castle, attended by two Knights and Servants. ALBERT following.

Well, hast told

Auranthe our intent imperial ?
Lest our rent banners, too o' the sudden shown,
Should fright her silken casements, and dismay
Her household to our lack of entertainment.
A victory !

Conrad. God save illustrious Otho !

Otho. Ay, Conrad, it will pluck out all gray hairs ;
 It is the best physician for the spleen ;
 The courtliest inviter to a feast ;
 The subtlest excuser of small faults ;
 And a nice judge in the age and smack of wine.

Enter, from the Castle, AURANTHE, followed by Pages holding up her robes, and a train of Women. She kneels.

Hail, my sweet hostess ! I do thank the stars,
 Or my good soldiers, or their ladies' eyes,
 That, after such a merry battle fought,
 I can, all safe in body and in soul,
 Kiss your fair hand and lady fortune's too.
 My ring ! now, on my life, it doth rejoice
 These lips to feel 't on this soft ivory !
 Keep it, my brightest daughter ; it may prove
 The little prologue to a line of kings.
 I strove against thee and my hot-blood son,
 Dull blockhead that I was to be so blind,
 But now my sight is clear ; forgive me, lady.

Auranthe. My lord, I was a vassal to your frown,
 And now your favour makes me but more humble ;
 In wintry winds the simple snow is safe,
 But fadeth at the greeting of the sun
 Unto thine anger I might well have spoken,
 Taking on me a woman's privilege,
 But this so sudden kindness makes me dumb.

Otho. What need of this ? Enough, if you will be
 A potent tutoress to my wayward boy,
 And teach him, what it seems his nurse could not,
 To say, for once, I thank you. Sigifred !

Albert. He has not yet return'd, my gracious
 liege.

Otho. What then ! No tidings of my friendly Arab ?

Conrad. None, mighty Otho.

[*To one of his Knights, who goes out.*

Send forth instantly

An hundred horsemen from my honoured gates,
To scour the plains and search the cottages,
Cry a reward, to him who shall first bring
News of that vanished Arabian,
A full-heap'd helmet of the purest gold.

Otho. More thanks, good Conrad; for, except my son's,

There is no face I rather would behold
Than that same quick-eyed pagan's. By the saints,
This coming night of banquets must not light
Her dazzling torches; nor the music breathe
Smooth, without clashing cymbal, tones of peace
And indoor melodies, nor the ruddy wine
Ebb spouting to the lees; if I pledge not,
In my first cup; that Arab!

Albert.

Mighty monarch,

I wonder not this stranger's victor deeds
So hang upon your spirit. Twice in the fight
It was my chance to meet his olive brow,
Triumphant in the enemy's shatter'd rhomb;
And, to say truth, in any Christian arm
I never saw such prowess.

Otho.

Did you ever?

O, 'tis a noble boy!—tut!—what do I say?
I mean a triple Saladin, whose eyes,
When in the glorious scuffle they met mine,
Seem'd to say—'Sleep, old man, in safety sleep;
I am the victory!'

Conrad.

Pity he's not here

Otho. And my son too, pity he is not here.
Lady Auranthe, I would not make you blush,
But can you give a guess where Ludolph is?
Know you not of him?

Auranthe.

Indeed, my liege, no secret—

Otho. Nay, nay, without more words, dost know
of him?

Auranthe. I would I were so over-fortunate,

Both for his sake and mine, and to make glad
A father's ears with tidings of his son

Otho. I see 'tis like to be a tedious day.
Were Theodore and Gonfred and the rest
Sent forth with my commands?

Albert.

Ay, my lord.

Otho. And no news! No news! Faith! 'tis very
strange

He thus avoids us. Lady, is 't not strange?
Will he be truant to you too? It is a shame.

Conrad. Will't please your highness enter, and accept
The unworthy welcome of your servant's house?
Leaving your cares to one whose diligence
May in few hours make pleasures of them all.

Otho. Not so tedious, Conrad. No, no, no,—
I must see Ludolph or the—— What's that shout?

Voices without. Huzza! huzza! Long live the
emperor!

Other Voices. Fall back! Away there!

Otho. Say, what noise is that?

[*ALBERT. advancing from the back of the Stage,
whether he had hastened on hearing the
cheers of the soldiery.*

Albert. It is young Gersa, the Hungarian prince,
Pick'd like a red stag from the fallow herd
Of prisoners. Poor prince, forlorn he steps,
Slow, and demure, and proud in his despair.
If I may judge by his so tragic bearing,
His eye not downcast, and his folded arm,
He doth this moment wish himself asleep
Among his fallen captains on yon plains

Enter GERSA, in chains, and guarded

Otho. Well said, Sir Albert.

Gersa

Not a word of greeting,

No welcome to a princely visitor,
Most mighty Otho? Will not my great host

Vouchsafe a syllable, before he bids
His gentlemen conduct me with all care
To some securest lodging?—cold perhaps!

Otho. What mood is this? Hath fortune touch'd
thy brain?

Gersa. O kings and princes of this fev'rous world,
What abject things, what mockeries must ye be,
What nerveless minions of safe palaces!
When here, a monarch, whose proud foot is used
To fallen princes' necks, as to his stirrup,
Must needs exclaim that I am mad, forsooth,
Because I cannot flatter with bent knees
My conqueror!

Otho. Gersa, I think you wrong me :
I think I have a better fame abroad

Gersa. I prythee mock me not with gentle speech,
But, as a favour, bid me from thy presence ;
Let me no longer be the wondering food
Of all these eyes ; prythee command me hence !

Otho. Do not mistake me, Gersa. That you may not,
Come, fair Auranthe, try if your soft hands
Can manage those hard rivets to set free
So brave a prince and soldier

Auranthe (sets him free) Welcome task !

Gersa. I am wound up in deep astonishment !
Thank you, fair lady. Otho ! emperor !
You rob me of myself ; my dignity
Is now your infant ; I am a weak child

Otho. Give me your hand, and let this kindly grasp
Live in our memories

Gersa. In mine it will.

I blush to think of my unchasten'd tongue ;
But I was haunted by the monstrous ghost
Of all our slain battalions. Sire, reflect,
And pardon you will grant, that, at this hour,
The bruised remnants of our stricken camp
Are huddling undistinguish'd my dear friends,
With common thousands, into shallow graves.

The portals of my state ; and, for my own
Pre-eminence and safety, I will strive
To keep thy strength upon its pedestal.
For, without thee, this day I might have been
A show-monster about the streets of Prague,
In-chains, as just now stood that noble prince :
And then to me no mercy had been shown,
For when the conquer'd lion is once dungeon'd,
Who lets him forth again ? or dares to give
An old lion sugar-cates of mild reprieve ?
Not to thine ear alone I make confession,
But to all here, as, by experience,
I know how the great basement of all power -
Is frankness, and a true tongue to the world ;
And how intriguing secrecy is proof
Of fear and weakness, and a hollow state.
Conrad, I owe thee much.

Conrad. To kiss that hand,
My emperor, is ample recompense,
For a mere act of duty.

Otho. Thou art wrong ;
For what can any man on earth do more ?
We will make trial of your house's welcome,
My bright Auranthe !

Conrad. How is Friedburg honoured !

Enter ETHELBERT and six Monks

Ethelbert. The benison of Heaven on your head,
Imperial Otho !

Otho. Who stays me ? Speak ! Quick !

Ethelbert. Pause but one moment, mighty conqueror,
Upon the threshold of this house of joy.

Otho. Pray, do not prose, good Ethelbert, but speak.
What is your purpose ?

Ethelbert. The restoration of some captive maids,
Devoted to Heaven's pious ministries,
Who, driven forth from their religious cells,
And kept in thralldom by our enemy,

When late this province was a lawless spoil,
Still weep amid the wild Hungarian camp,
Though hemm'd around by thy victorious arms.

Otho. Demand the holy sisterhood in our name
From Gersa's tents. Farewell, old Ethelbert.

Ethelbert. The saints will bless you for this pious
care.

Otho. Daughter, your hand, Ludolph's would fit it
best.

Conrad. Ho ! let the music sound !

[*Music.* *ETHELBERT raises his hands, as in
benediction of OTHO. Exeunt severally.
The scene closes on them.*

SCENE III.—*The Country, with the Castle in the distance*

Enter LUDOLPH and SIGIFRED

Ludolph. You have my secret ; let it not be breath'd.

Sigifred. Still give me leave to wonder that the prince
Ludolph and the swift Arab are the same ;
Still to rejoice that 'twas a German arm
Death doing in a furban'd masquerade

Ludolph. The emperor must not know it, Sigifred

Sigifred. I prythee, why ? What happier hour of time
Could thy pleas'd star point down upon from heaven
With silver index, bidding thee make peace ?

Ludolph. Still it must not be known, good Sigifred ;
The star may point oblique.

Sigifred. If Otho knew
His son to be that unknown Mussulman
After whose spurring heels he sent me forth,
With one of his well-pleas'd Olympian oaths,
The charters of man's greatness, at this hour
He would be watching round the Castle walls,
And, like an anxious warder, strain his sight
For the first glimpse of such a son return'd—
Ludolph, that blast of the Hungarians,

That Saracenic meteor of the fight,
That silent fury, whose fell scimitar
Kept danger all aloof from Otho's head,
And left him space for wonder.

Ludolph.

Say no more.

Not as a swordsman would I pardon claim,
But as a son. The bronz'd centurion,
Long toil'd in foreign wars, and whose high deeds
Are shaded in a forest of tall spears,
Known only to his troop, hath greater plea
Of favour with my sire than I can have.

Sigifred. My lord, forgive me that I cannot see
How this proud temper with clear reason squares.
What made you then, with such an anxious love,
Hover around that life, whose bitter days
You vext with bad revolt? Was 't opium,
Or the mad-fumed wine? Nay, do not frown,
I rather would grieve with you than upbraid.

Ludolph. I do believe you. No, 'twas not to make
A father his son's debtor, or to heal
His deep heart-sickness for a rebel child.
'Twas done in memory of my boyish days,
Poor cancel for his kindness to my youth,
For all his calming of my childish griefs,
And all his smiles upon my merriment.
No, not a thousand foughten fields could sponge
Those days paternal from my memory,
Though now upon my head he heaps disgrace.

Sigifred. My prince, you think too harshly—

Ludolph.

Can I so?

Hath he not gall'd my spirit to the quick?
And with a sullen rigour obstinate
Pour'd out a phial of wrath upon my faults?
Hunted me as the Tartar does the boar,
Driven me to the very edge o' the world,
And almost put a price upon my head?

Sigifred. Remember how he spar'd the rebel lords.

Ludolph. Yes, yes, I know he hath a noble nature

That cannot trample on the fallen. But his
 Is not the only proud heart in his realm.
 He hath wrong'd me, and I have done him wrong ;
 He hath lov'd me, and I have shown him kindness ;
 We should be almost equal.

Sigfred. Yet, for all this,
 I would you had appear'd among those lords,
 And ta'en his favour.

Ludolph. Ha ! till now I thought
 My friend had held poor Ludolph's honour dear.
 What ! would you have me sue before his throne
 And kiss the courtier's missal, its silk steps ?
 Or hug the golden housings of his steed,
 Amid a camp, whose steeled swarms I dar'd
 But yesterday ? And, at the trumpet sound,
 Bow like some unknown mercenary's flag,
 And lick the soiled grass ? No, no, my friend,
 I would not, I, be pardon'd in the heap,
 And bless indemnity with all that scum,—
 Those men I mean, who on my shoulders propp'd
 Their weak rebellion, winning me with lies,
 And pitying forsooth my many wrongs ;
 Poor self-deceived wretches, who must think
 Each one himself a king in embryo,
 Because some dozen vassals cry'd—my lord !
 Cowards, who never knew their little hearts,
 Till flurried danger held the mirror up,
 And then they own'd themselves without a blush,
 Curling, like spaniels, round my father's feet.
 Such things deserted me and are forgiven,
 While I, least guilty, am an outcast still,
 And will be, for I love such fair disgrace.

Sigfred. I know the clear truth ; so would Otho see,
 For he is just and noble. Fain would I
 Be pleader for you——

Ludolph. He'll hear none of it ;
 You know his temper, hot, proud, obstinate ;
 Endanger not yourself so uselessly.

I will encounter his thwart spleen myself,
To-day, at the Duke Conrad's, where he keeps
His crowded state after the victory.
There will I be, a most unwelcome guest,
And parley with him, as a son should do,
Who doubly loathes a father's tyranny;
Tell him how feeble is that tyranny;
How the relationship of father and son
Is no more valid than a silken leash
Where lions tug-adverse, if love grow not
From interchanged love through many years.
Ay, and those turreted Franconian walls,
Like to a jealous casket, hold my pearl—
My fair Auranthe! Yes, I will be there.

Sigifred. Be not so rash, wait till his wrath shall
pass,

Until his royal spirit softly ebbs
Self-influenced; then, in his morning dreams
He will forgive thee, and awake in grief
To have not thy good-morrow.

Ludolph.

Yes, to-day

I must be there, while her young pulses beat
Among the new-plum'd minions of the war.
Have you seen her of late? No? Auranthe,
Franconia's fair sister, 'tis I mean.
She should be paler for my troublous days—
And there it is—my father's iron lips
Have sworn divorcement 'twixt me and my right.

Sigifred (aside). Auranthe! I had hop'd this whim
had pass'd

Ludolph. And, Sigifred, with all his love of justice,
When will he take that grandchild in his arms,
That, by my love I swear, shall soon be his?
This reconciliation is impossible,
For see—but who are these?

Sigifred.

They are messengers

From our great emperor; to you, I doubt not,
For couriers are abroad to seek you out.

Enter THEODORE and GONFRED

Theodore. Seeing so many vigilant eyes explore
The province to invite your highness back
To your high dignities, we are too happy.

Gonfred. We have no eloquence to colour justly
The emperor's anxious wishes.

Ludolph.

Go. I follow you.

[Exeunt THEODORE and GONFRED]

I play the prude : it is but venturing—
Why should he be so earnest? Come, my friend,
Let us to Friedburg Castle.

ACT II

SCENE I.—*An Antechamber in the Castle*

Enter LUDOLPH and SIGIFRED

Ludolph. No more advices, no more cautioning :
I leave it all to fate—to anything !
I cannot square my conduct to time, place,
Or circumstance ; to me 'tis all a mist !

Sigifred. I say no more.

Ludolph. It seems I am to wait
Here in the anteroom ;—that may be a trifle.
You see now how I dance attendance here,
Without that tyrant temper, you so blame,
Snapping the rein. You have medicin'd me
With good advices ; and I here remain,
In this most honourable anteroom,
Your patient scholar.

Sigifred. Do not wrong me, prince.
By Heavens, I'd rather kiss Duke Conrad's slipper,
When in the morning he doth yawn with pride,
Than see you humbled but a half-degree !

Truth is, the emperor would fain dismiss
The nobles ere he sees you.

Enter GONFRED from the Council-room

Ludolph. Well, sir ! what ?

Gonfred. Great honour to the prince ! The emperor,
Hearing that his brave son had re-appeared,
Instant dismiss'd the Council from his sight,
As Jove fans off the clouds. Even now they pass.

{Exi..}

*Enter the Nobles from the Council-room. They cross
the Stage, bowing with respect to LUDOLPH, he
frowning on them. CONRAD follows. Exeunt
Nobles.*

Ludolph. Not the discoloured poisons of a fen,
Which he who breathes feels warning of his death,
Could taste so nauseous to the bodily sense,
As these prodigious sycophants disgust
The soul's fine palate.

Conrad Princely Ludolph, hail !
Welcome, thou younger-sceptre to the realm !
Strength to thy virgin crownlet's golden buds,
That they, against the winter of thy sire,
May burst, and swell, and flourish round thy brows,
Maturing to a weighty diadem !
Yet be that hour far off ; and may he live,
Who waits for thee, as the chapp'd earth for rain.
Set my life's star ! I have lived long enough,
Since under my glad roof, propitiously,
Father and son each other repossess

Ludolph. Fine wording, duke ! but words could
never yet
Foretell the fates ; have you learnt that yet ?
Let me look well : your features are the same ;
Your gait the same ; your hair of the same shade ;
As one I knew some passed weeks ago,

Who sung far different notes into mine ears.
I have mine own particular comments on 't;
You have your own, perhaps.

Conrad. My gracious prince
All men may err. In truth I was deceived
In your great father's nature, as you were.
Had I known that of him I have since known,
And what you soon will learn, I would have turn'd
My sword to my own throat, rather than held
Its threatening edge against a good king's quiet:
Or with one word fever'd you, gentle prince,
Who seem'd to me, as rugged times then went,
Indeed too much oppress'd. May I be bold
To tell the emperor you will haste to him?

Ludolph. Your dukedom's privilege will grant so
much. *[Exit CONRAD.]*

He's very close to Otho, a tight leech!
Your hand—I go. Ha! here the thunder comes
Sullen against the wind! If in two angry brows
My safety lies, then, Sigifred, I'm safe.

Enter OTHO and CONRAD

Otho. Will you make Titan play the lackey-page
To chattering pigmies? I would have you know
That such neglect of our high majesty
Annuls all feel of kindred. What is son,—
Or friend,—or brother,—or all ties of blood,—
When the whole kingdom, centred in ourself,
Is rudely slighted? Who am I to wait?
By Peter's chair! I have upon my tongue
A word to fright the proudest spirit here!—
Death!—and slow tortures to the hardy fool,
Who dares take such large charter from our smiles!
Conrad, we would be private. Sigifred!
Off! And none pass this way on pain of death!

[Exeunt CONRAD and SIGIFRED.]

Ludolph. This was but half expected, my good sire,

Yet I am griev'd at it, to the full height,
As though my hopes of favour had been whole.

Otho. How you indulge yourself! What can you hope for?

Ludolph. Nothing, my liege; I have to hope for nothing.

I come to greet you as a loving son;
And then depart, if I may be so free,
Seeing that blood of yours in my warm veins
Has not yet mitigated into milk.

Otho. What would you, sir?

Ludolph. A lenient banishment:

So please you let me unmolested pass
This Conrad's gates, to the wide air again.
I want no more A rebel wants no more.

Otho. And shall I let a rebel loose again
To muster kites and eagles 'gainst my head?
No, obstinate boy, you shall be kept cag'd up,
Serv'd with harsh food, with scum for Sunday-drink

Ludolph. Indeed!

Otho. And chains too heavy for your life:
I'll choose a gaoler, whose swart monstrous face
Shall be a hell to look upon, and she——

Ludolph.

Ha!

Otho. Shall be your fair Auranthe.

Ludolph.

Amaze! Amaze!

Otho. To-day you marry her

Ludolph.

This is a sharp jest!

Otho. No None at all When have I said a lie?

Ludolph. If I sleep not, I am a waking wretch.

Otho. Not a word more. Let me embrace my child.

Ludolph. I dare not. 'Twould pollute so good a father!

O heavy crime! that your son's blinded eyes

Could not see all his parent's love aright,

As now I see it. Be not kind to me—

Punish me not with favour.

Otho.

Are you sure,

Ludolph, you have no saving plea in store?

Ludolph. My father, none!

Otho.

Then you astonish me.

Ludolph. No, I have no plea. Disobedience,
Rebellion, obstinacy, blasphemy,
Are all my counsellors. If they can make
My crooked deeds show good and plausible,
Then grant me loving pardon, but not else,
Good Gods! not else, in any way, my liege!

Otho. You are a most perplexing, noble boy.

Ludolph. You not less a perplexing noble father.

Otho. Well, you shall have free passport through
the gates.

Farewell!

Ludolph. Farewell! and by these tears believe,
And still remember, I repent in pain
All my misdeeds!

Otho. Ludolph, I will! I will!

But, Ludolph, ere you go, I would inquire
If you, in all your wandering, ever met
A certain Arab haunting in these parts.

Ludolph. No, my good lord, I cannot say I did

Otho. Make not your father blind before his time;
Nor let these arms paternal hunger more
For an embrace, to dull the appetite
Of my great love for thee, my supreme child!
Come close, and let me breathe into thine ear.
I knew you through disguise. You are the Arab!
You can't deny it. *[Embracing him.]*

Ludolph. Happiest of days!

Otho. We'll make it so.

Ludolph. 'Steal of one fatted calf.

Ten hecatombs shall bellow out their last,
Smote 'twixt the horns by the death-stunning mace
Of Mars, and all the soldiery shall feast
Nobly as Nimrod's masons, when the towers
Of Nineveh new kiss'd the parted clouds!

Otho. Large as a God speak out, where all is thine.

Ludolph. Ay, father, but the fire in my sad breast

Is quench'd with inward tears! I must rejoice

For you, whose wings so shadow over me

In tender victory, but for myself

I still must mourn. The fair Auranthe mine!

Too great a boon! I prythee let me ask

What more than I know of could so have changed

Your purpose touching her?

Otho

At a word, this:

In no deed did you give me more offence

Than your rejection of Erminia.

To my appalling, I saw too good proof

Of your keen-eyed suspicion,—she is naught!

Ludolph You are convinc'd?

Otho.

Ay, spite of her sweet looks.

O, that my brother's daughter should so fall!

Her fame has pass'd into the grosser lips

Of soldiers in their cups.

Ludolph.

'Tis very sad.

Otho. No more of her. Auranthe—*Ludolph*, come!

This marriage be the bond of endless peace! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*The Entrance of GERSA's Tent in the Hungarian Camp*

Enter ERMINIA

Erminia. Where! where! where shall I find a messenger?

A trusty soul? A good man in the camp?

Shall I go myself? Monstrous wickedness!

O cursed Conrad! devilish Auranthe!

Here is proof palpable as the bright sun!

O for a voice to reach the emperor's ears!

[*Shouts in the Camp.*]

Enter an HUNGARIAN CAPTAIN

Captain. Fair prisoner, hear you those joyous shouts?

The king—ay, now our king,—but still your slave,
Young Gersa, from a short captivity
Has just return'd. He bids me say, bright dame,
That even the homage of his ranged chiefs
Cures not his keen impatience to behold
Such beauty once again. What ails you, lady?

Erminia. Say, is not that a German, yonder? There!

Captain. Methinks by his stout bearing he should
be——

Yes—'tis one Albert; a brave German knight,
And much in the emperor's favour.

Erminia. I would fain
Inquire of friends and kinsfolk; how they fared
In these rough times. Brave soldier, as you pass
To royal Gersa with my humble thanks,
Will you send yonder knight to me?

Captain. I will. [*Exit.*]

Erminia. Yes, he was ever known to be a man
Frank, open, generous; Albert I may trust
O proof! proof! proof! Albert's an honest man;
Not Ethelbert the monk, if he were here,
Would I hold more trustworthy. Now!

Enter ALBERT

Albert. Good gods!
Lady Erminia! are you prisoner
In this beleaguer'd camp? Or are you here
Of your own will? You pleas'd to send for me
By Venus, 'tis a pity I knew not
Your plight before, and, by her son, I swear
To do you every service you can ask.
What would the fairest——?

Erminia. Albert, will you swear?

Albert. I have. Well?

Erminia. Albert, you have fame to lose.
If men, in court and camp, lie not outright,
You should be, from a thousand, chosen forth
To do an honest deed. Shall I confide—?

Albert. Ay, anything to me, fair creature. Do ;
Dictate my task. Sweet woman—

Erminia. Truce with that.
You understand me not ; and, in your speech,
I see how far the slander is abroad.

Without proof could you think me innocent ?

Albert. Lady, I should rejoice to know you so.

Erminia. If you have any pity for a maid,
Suffering a daily death from evil tongues ;
Any compassion for that emperor's niece,
Who, for your bright sword and clear honesty,
Lifted you from the crowd of common men
Into the lap of honour ; save me, knight !

Albert. How ? Make it clear ; if it be possible,
I, by the banner of Saint Maurice, swear
To right you.

Erminia. Possible !—Easy.—O my heart !
This letter's not so soil'd but you may read it ;—
Possible ! There—that letter ! Read—read it.

[*Gives him a letter.*]

Albert (reading). 'To the Duke Conrad.—Forget
the threat you made at parting, and I will forget to send
the emperor letters and papers of yours I have become
possessed of. His life is no trifle to me ; his death you
shall find none to yourself.' (*Speaks to himself.*) 'Tis
me—my life that's pleaded for !' (*Reads.*) 'He, for
his own sake, will be dumb as the grave. Erminia has
my shame fix'd upon her, sure as a wen. We are safe.'

'AURANTHE.'

A she-devil ! A dragon ! I her imp !
Fire of Hell ! Auranthe—lewd demon !
Where got you this ? Where ? When ?

Erminia. I found it in the tent, among some
spoils

Which, being noble, fell to Gersa's lot.

Come in, and see. *[They go in and return.]*

Albert. Villainy! Villainy!

Conrad's sword, his corslet, and his helm,
And his letter. Caitiff, he shall feel—

Erminia. I see you are thunderstruck. Haste,
haste away!

Albert. O I am tortured by this villainy.

Erminia. You needs must be. Carry it swift to
Otho;

Tell him, moreover, I am prisoner
Here in this camp, where all the sisterhood,
Forc'd from their quiet cells, are parcell'd out
For slaves among these Huns. Away! Away!

Albert. I am gone.

Erminia. Swift be your steed! Within this hour
The emperor will see it.

Albert. Ere I sleep:

That I can swear. *[Hurries out.]*

Gersa (without). Brave captains! thanks. Enough
Of loyal homage now!

Enter GERSA

Erminia. Hail, royal Hun!

Gersa. What means this, fair one? Why in such
alarm?

Who was it hurried by me so distract?
It seem'd you were in deep discourse together;
Your doctrine has not been so harsh to him
As to my poor deserts. Come, come, be plain.
I am no jealous fool to kill you both,
Or, for such trifles, rob the adorned world
Of such a beauteous vestal.

Erminia. I grieve, my lord,
To hear you condescend to ribald phrase.

Gersa. This is too much! Hearken, my lady
pure!

Erminia. Silence! and hear the magic of a name—

Erminia ! I am she,—the emperor's niece !
Prais'd be the heavens, I now dare own myself !

Gersa. Erminia ! Indeed ! I've heard of her.
Prythee, fair lady, what chance brought you here ?

Erminia. Ask your own soldiers.

Gersa. And you dare own your name.
For loveliness you may—and for the rest
My vein is not censorious

Erminia. Alas ! poor me !
'Tis false indeed.

Gersa. Indeed you are too fair :
The swan, soft leaning on her fledgy breast,
When to the stream she launches, looks not back
With such a tender grace ; nor are her wings
So white as your soul is, if that but be
Twin-picture to your face. Erminia !
To-day, for the first day, I am a king,
Yet would I give my unworn crown away
To know you spotless.

Erminia. Trust me one day more,
Generously, without more certain guarantee,
Than this poor face you deign to praise so much ;
After that, say and do whate'er you please.
If I have any knowledge of you, sir,
I think, nay I am sure, you will grieve much
To hear my story. O be gentle to me,
For I am sick and faint with many wrongs,
Tir'd out, and weary-worn with contumelies.

Gersa. Poor lady !

Enter ETHELBERT

Erminia. Gentle prince, 'tis false indeed.
Good-morrow, holy father ! I have had
Your prayers, though I look'd for you in vain.

Ethelbert Blessings upon you, daughter !—Sure
you look
Too cheerful for these foul pernicious days.

Young man, you heard this virgin say 'twas false,—
 'Tis false, I say. What! can you not employ
 Your temper elsewhere, 'mong these burly tents;
 But you must taunt this dove, for she hath lost
 The Eagle Otho to beat off assault?
 Fiè! fiè! But I will be her guaïd myself;
 In the emperor's name. I here demand of you
 Heïself, and all her sisterhood. She false!

Gersa. Peace! peace, old man! I cannot think
 she is.

Ethelbert. Whom I have known from her first infancy,
 Baptiz'd her in the bosom of the Church,
 Watch'd her, as anxious husbandmen the grain,
 From the first shoot till the unripe mid-May,
 Then to the tender ear of her June days,
 Which, lifting sweet abroad its timid green,
 Is blighted by the touch of calumny;
 You cannot credit such a monstrous tale.

Gersa. I cannot. Take her. Fair Erminia,
 I follow you to Friedburg,—is 't not so?

Erminia. Ay, so we purpose.

Ethelbert. Daughter, do you so?
 How's this? I marvel! Yet you look not mad.

Erminia. I have good news to tell you, Ethelbert.

Gersa. Ho! ho, there! Guards!
 Your blessing, father! Sweet Erminia,
 Believe me, I am well-nigh sure——

Erminia. Farewell!
 Short time will show.

[*Enter Chiefs.*]

Yes, Father Ethelbert,
 I have news precious as we pass along.

Ethelbert. Dear daughter, you shall guide me.

Erminia. To no ill.

Gersa. Command an escort to the Friedburg lines.

[*Exeunt Chiefs.*]

Pray let me lead. Fair lady, forget not

Gersa, how he believ'd you innocent.

I follow you to Friedburg with all speed. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter SIGIFRED

Sigifred A fine humour—

Albert. Who goes there? Count Sigifred? Ha! Ha!

Sigifred. What, man, do you mistake the hollow sky
For a throng'd tavern,—and these stubbed trees
For old serge hangings,—me, your humble friend,
For a poor waiter? Why, man, how you stare!
What gipsies have you been carousing with?
No, no more wine; methinks you've had enough.

Albert. You well may laugh and banter. What
a fool!

An injury may make of a staid man!

You shall know all anon.

Sigifred. Some tavern brawl?

Albert. 'Twas with some people out of common
reach;

Revenge is difficult

Sigifred. I am your friend;

We meet again to-day, and can confer

Upon it. For the present I'm in haste.

Albert. Whither?

Sigifred. To fetch King Gersa to the feast.

The emperor on this marriage is so hot,

Pray heaven it end not in apoplexy!

The very porters, as I pass'd the doors,

Heard his loud laugh, and answer'd in full choir.

I marvel, Albert, you delay so long

From those bright revelries; go, show yourself,

You may be made a duke.

Albert. Ay, very like.

Pray, what day has his highness fix'd upon?

Sigifred. For what?

Albert. The marriage. What else can I mean?

Sigifred. To-day! O, I forgot, you could not know,
The news is scarce a minute old with me

Albert. Married to-day! To-day! You did not say so?

Sigifred. Now, while I speak to you, their comely
heads

Are bow'd before the mitre.

Albert. O ! monstrous !

Sigifred. What is this ?

Albert. Nothing, Sigifred. Farewell !
We'll meet upon our subject. Farewell, count !

[*Exit.*

Sigifred. To this clear-headed Albert ? He brain-
turn'd !

'Tis as portentous as a meteor.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in the Castle*

Enter, as from the Marriage, OTHO, LUDOLPH, AURANTHE, CONRAD, Nobles, Knights, Ladies, etc Music.

Otho. Now, Ludolph ! Now, Auranthe ! Daughter fair !

What can I find to grace your nuptial day
More than my love, and these wide realms in fee ?

Ludolph. I have too much.

Auranthe. And I, my liege, by far.

Ludolph. Auranthe ! I have ! O, my bride, my love !
Not all the gaze upon us can restrain
My eyes, too long poor exiles from thy face,
From adoration, and my foolish tongue
From uttering soft responses to the love
I see in thy mute beauty beaming forth !
Fair creature, bless me with a single word !
All mine !

Auranthe. Spare, spare me, my lord ; I swoon else.

Ludolph. Soft beauty ! by to-morrow I should die,
Wert thou not mine. [*They talk apart.*

First Lady. How deep she has bewitch'd
him !

First Knight Ask you for her recipe for love philtres.

Second Lady They hold the emperor in admiration.

Otho. If ever king was happy, that am I !

What are the cities 'yond the Alps to me,
 The provinces about the Danube's mouth,
 The promise of fair soil beyond the Rhone;
 Or routing out of Hyperborean hordes,
 To these fair children, stars of a new age?
 Unless perchance I might rejoice to win
 This little ball of earth, and chuck it them
 To play with!

Auranthe Nay, my lord, I do not know.

Ludolph Let me not famish.

Otho (to *Conrad*) Good Franconia,
 You heard what oath I swear, as the sun rose,
 That unless Heaven would send me back my son,
 My Arab,—no soft music should enrich
 The cool wine, kiss'd off with a soldier's smack.
 Now all my empire, barter'd for one feast,
 Seems poverty.

Conrad. Upon the neighbour-plain
 The heralds have prepar'd a royal lists;
 Your knights, found war-proof in the bloody field,
 Speed to the game

Otho. Well, Ludolph, what say you?

Ludolph. My lord!

Otho. A tourney?

Conrad. Or, if 't please you best—

Ludolph. I want no more!

First Lady. He soars!

Second Lady. Past all reason.

Ludolph. Though heaven's choir
 Should in a vast circumference descend
 And sing for my delight, I'd stop my ears!
 Though bright Apollo's car stood burning here,
 And he put out an arm to bid me mount,
 His touch an immortality, not I!
 This earth, this palace, this room, Auranthe!

Otho. This is a little painful; just too much.
Conrad, if he flames longer in this wise,
 I shall believe in wizard-woven loves

And old romances ; but I'll break the spell.

Ludolph !

Conrad. He will be calm, anon.

Ludolph. You call'd ?

Yes, yes, yes, I offend. You must forgive me ;

Not being quite recover'd from the stun

Of your large bounties. A tourney, is it not ?

[A senet heard faintly.]

Conrad. The trumpets reach us.

Ethelbert (without). On your peril, sirs,

Detain us !

First Voice (without). Let not the abbot pass.

Second Voice (without). No,

On your lives !

First Voice (without). Holy father, you must not.

Ethelbert (without). Otho !

Otho.

Who calls on Otho ?

Ethelbert (without).

Ethelbert !

Otho. Let him come in.

[Enter ETHELBERT leading in ERMINIA.]

Thou cursed abbot, why

Hast brought pollution to our holy rites ?

Hast thou no fear of hangman, or the faggot ?

Ludolph. What portent—what strange prodigy is this ?

Conrad. Away !

Ethelbert. You, duke ?

Erminia. Albert has surely fail'd me !

Look at the emperor's brow upon me bent !

Ethelbert. A sad delay !

Conrad

Away, thou guilty thing !

Ethelbert. You again, duke ? Justice, most mighty Otho !

You—go to your sister there and plot again,

A quick plot, swift as thought to save your heads ;

For lo ! the toils are spread around your den,

The world is all agape to see dragg'd forth

Two ugly monsters.

Ludolph. What means he, my lord?

Conrad. I cannot guess.

Ethelbert. Best ask your lady sister,
Whether the riddle puzzles her beyond
The power of utterance.

Conrad. Foul barbarian, cease;
The princess faints!

Ludolph. Stab him! O, sweetest wife!
[Attendants bear off AURANTHE.]

Ermina. Alas!

Ethelbert. Your wife?

Ludolph. Ay, Satan! does that yerk ye?

Ethelbert. Wife! so soon!

Ludolph. Ay, wife! Oh, impudence!
Thou bitter mischief! Venomous mad priest!
How dar'st thou lift those beetle brows at me?
Me—the Prince Ludolph, in this presence here,
Upon my marriage-day, and scandalise
My joys with such opprobrious surprise?
Wife! Why dost linger on that syllable,
As if it were some demon's name pronounc'd
To summon harmful lightning, and make roar
The sleepy thunder? Hast no sense of fear?
No ounce of man in thy mortality?

Tremble! for, at my nod, the sharpen'd axe
Will make thy bold tongue quiver to the roots,
Those gray lids wink, and thou not know it more!

Ethelbert. O, poor deceived prince! I pity thee!
Great Otho! I claim justice——

Ludolph. Thou shalt have 't!
Thine arms from forth a pulpit of hot fire
Shall sprawl distracted! O that that dull cowl
Were some most sensitive portion of thy life,
That I might give it to my hounds to tear!
Thy girdle some fine zealous-pained nerve
To girth my saddle! And those devil's beads
Each one a life, that I might, every day,
Crush one with Vulcan's hammer!

Otho. Peace, my son ;
You far outstrip my spleen in this affair.
Let us be calm, and hear the abbot's plea
For this intrusion

Ludolph I am silent, sire

Otho. Conrad, see all depart not wanted here

[*Exeunt Knights, Ladies, etc.*]

Ludolph, be calm. — *Ethelbert*, peace awhile
This mystery demands an audience
Of a just judge, and that will *Otho* be.

Ludolph. Why has he time to breathe another
word ?

Otho. *Ludolph*, old *Ethelbert*, be sure, comes not
To beard us for no cause ; he's not the man
To cry himself up an ambassador
Without credentials.

Ludolph I'll chain up myself

Otho Old abbot, stand here forth Lady *Erminia*,
Sit. And now, abbot ! what have you to say ?
Our ear is open First we here denounce
Hard penalties against thee, if 't be found
The cause for which you have disturb'd us here,
Making our bright hours muddy, be a thing
Of little moment

Ethelbert. See this innocent !

Otho ! thou father of the people call'd,
Is her life nothing ? Her fair honour nothing ?
Her tears from matins until even-song
Nothing ? Her burst-heart nothing ? *Emperor* !
Is this your gentle niece—the simplest flower
Of the world's herbal—this fair lily blanch'd
Still with the dews of piety, this meek lady
Here sitting like an angel newly-shent,
Who veils its snowy wings and grows all pale,—
Is she nothing ?

Otho. What more to the purpose, abbot :

Ludolph. Whither is he winding ?

Conrad.

No clue yet !

Ethelbert. You have heard, my liege, and so, no doubt, all here,

Foul, poisonous, malignant whisperings ;
 Nay open speech, rude mockery grown common,
 Against the spotless nature and clear fame
 Of the Princess Erminia, your niece.
 I have intruded here thus suddenly,
 Because I hold those base weeds, with tight hand,
 Which now disfigure her fair growing stem,
 Waiting but for your sign to pull them up
 By the dark roots, and leave her palpable,
 To all men's sight, a lady, innocent.
 The ignominy of that whisper'd tale
 About a midnight gallant, seen to climb
 A window to her chamber neighbour'd near,
 I will from her turn off, and put the load
 On the right shoulders ; on that wretch's head,
 Who, by close stratagems, did save herself,
 Chiefly by shifting to this lady's room
 A rope-ladder for false witness.

Ludolph. Most atrocious !

Otho Ethelbert, proceed

Ethelbert With sad lips I shall :

For, in the healing of one wound, I fear
 To make a greater. His young highness here
 To-day was married.

Ludolph. Good

Ethelbert Would it were good !

Yet why do I delay to spread abroad
 The names of those two vipers, from whose jaws
 A deadly breath went forth to taint and blast
 This guileless lady ?

Otho. Abbot, speak their names

Ethelbert. A minute first It cannot be—but may
 I ask, great judge, if you to-day have put
 A letter by unread ?

Otho Does 't end in this ?

Conrad. Out with their names !

Ethelbert. Bold sinner, say you so?

Ludolph. Out, tedious monk!

Otho. Confess, or by the wheel——

Ethelbert. My evidence cannot be far away;
And, though it never come, be on my head
The crime of passing an attain upon
The slanderers of this virgin.

Ludolph. Speak aloud!

Ethelbert. Auranthe, and her brother there.

Conrad. Amaze!

Ludolph. Throw them from the windows!

Otho. Do what you will!

Ludolph. What shall I do with them?

Something of quick despatch, for should she hear,
My soft Auranthe, her sweet mercy would
Prevail against my fury. Damned priest!
What swift death wilt thou die? As to the lady,
I touch her not.

Ethelbert. Illustrious Otho, stay!

An ample store of misery thou hast,
Choke not the granary of thy noble mind
With more bad bitter grain, too difficult
A cud for the repentance of a man

Gray-growing. To thee only I appeal,
Not to thy noble son, whose yeasting youth
Will clear itself, and crystal turn again.

A young man's heart, by Heaven's blessing, is
A wide world, where a thousand new-born hopes
Empurple fresh the melancholy blood:

But an old man's is narrow, tenantless

Of hopes, and stuff'd with many memories,

Which, being pleasant, ease the heavy pulse—
Painful, clog up and stagnate. Weigh this matter
Even as a miser balances his coin;

And, in the name of mercy, give command
That your knight Albert be brought here before you.
He will expound this riddle; he will show
A noonday proof of bad Auranthe's guilt.

Otho. Let Albert straight be summon'd.

[*Exit one of the Nobles.*

Ludolph.

Impossible!

I cannot doubt—I will not—no—to doubt
Is to be ashes!—wither'd up to death!

Otho. My gentle Ludolph, harbour not a fear;
You do yourself much wrong.

Ludolph

O, wretched dolt!

Now, when my foot is almost on thy neck,
Wilt thou infuriate me! Proof! Thou fool!
Why wilt thou tease impossibility
With such a thick-skull'd persevering suit?
Fanatic obstinacy! Prodigy!
Monster of folly! Ghost of a turn'd brain!
You puzzle me,—you haunt me,—when I dream
Of you my brain will split! Bald sorcerer!
Juggler! May I come near you? On my soul
I know not whether to pity, curse, or laugh.

Enter ALBERT, and the Nobleman

Here, Albert, this old phantom wants a proof!
Give him his proof! A camel's load of proofs!

Otho. Albert, I speak to you as to a man
Whose words once utter'd pass like current gold;
And therefore fit to calmly put a close
To this brief tempest Do you stand possess'd
Of any proof against the honourableness
Of Lady Auranthe, our new-spoused daughter?

Albert. You chill me with astonishment 'How's this?
My liege, what proof should I have 'gainst a fame
Impossible of slur?

[*OTHO rises.*

Erminia. O wickedness!

Ethelbert. Deluded monarch, 'tis a cruel lie.

Otho. Peace, rebel-priest!

Conrad. Insult beyond credence!

Erminia. Almost a dream!

Ludolph. We have awaked from

A foolish dream that from my brow hath wrung

A wrathful dew. O folly ! why did I
 So act the lion with this silly guat ?
 Let them depart. Lady Erminia !
 I ever griev'd for you, as who did not ?
 But now you have, with such a brazen front,
 So most inaliciously, so madly striven
 To dazzle the soft moon, when tenderest clouds
 Should be unlooped around to curtain her ;
 I leave you to the desert of the world
 Almost with pleasure. Let them be set free
 For me ! I take no personal revenge
 More than against a nightmare, which a man
 Forgets in the new dawn [Exit Ludolph.

Otho. Still in extremes ! No, they must not be loose

Ethelbert. Albert, I must suspect thee of a crime
 So fiendish——

Otho. Fear'st not my fury, monk ?
 Conrad, be they in your safe custody
 Till we determine some fit punishment.
 It is so mad a deed, I must reflect
 And question them in private ; for perhaps,
 By patient scrutiny, we may discover
 Whether they merit death, or should be placed
 In care of the physicians.

[Exeunt OTHO and Nobles, ALBERT following.

Conrad. My guards, ho !

Erminia. Albert, wilt thou follow there ?
 Wilt thou creep dastardly behind his back,
 And slink away from a weak woman's eye ?
 Turn, thou court-Janus ! thou forget'st thyself ;
 Here is the duke, waiting with open arms,

[Enter Guards.
 To thank thee ; here congratulate each other ;
 Wring hands ; embrace ; and swear how lucky 'twas
 That I, by happy chance, hit the right man
 Of all the world to trust in.

Albert.

Trust ! to me !

Conrad (aside). He is the sole one in this mystery,

Erminia. Well, I give up, and save my prayers for Heaven !

You, who could do this deed, would ne'er relent,
Though, at my words, the hollow prison-vaults
Would groan for pity.

Conrad. Manacle them both !

Ethelbert. I know it—it must be—I see it all !
Albert, thou art the minion !

Erminia. Ah ! too plain——

Conrad. Silence ! Gag up their mouths ! I cannot bear

More of this brawling. That the emperor
Had plac'd you in some other custody !

Bring them away. [*Exeunt all but ALBERT.*]

Albert. Though my name perish from the book of honour,
Almost before the recent ink is dry,
And be no more remember'd after death,
Than any drummer's in the muster-roll ;
Yet shall I season high my sudden fall
With triumph o'er that evil-witted duke !
He shall feel what it is to have the hand
Of a man drowning, on his hateful throat.

Enter GERSA and SIGIFRED

Gersa. What discord is at ferment in this house ?

Sigifred. We are without conjecture ; not a soul
We met could answer any certainty.

Gersa. Young Ludolph, like a fiery arrow, shot
By us.

Sigifred. The emperor, with cross'd arms, in thought.

Gersa. In one room music, in another sadness,
In every where !

A trifle more !
Your presences will much avail
Jarred spirits. I'll explain.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV

SCENE I.—AURANTHE'S *Apartment*

AURANTHE and CONRAD *discovered*

Conrad. Well, well, I know what ugly jeopardy
We are cag'd in ; you need not pester that
Into my ears. Prythee, let me be spared
A foolish tongue, that I may bethink me
Of remedies with some deliberation.
You cannot doubt but 'tis in Albert's power
To crush or save us ?

Auranthe. No, I cannot doubt.
He has, assure yourself, by some strange means,
My secret ; which I ever hid from him,
Knowing his mawkish honesty:

Conrad. Curs'd slave !

Auranthe. Ay, I could almost curse him now myself.
Wretched impediment ! Evil genius !
A glue upon my wings, that cannot spread,
When they should span the provinces ! A snake,
A scorpion, sprawling on the first gold step,
Conducting to the throne, high canopied.

Conrad. You would not hear my council, when his life
Might have been trodden out, all sure and hush'd ;
Now the dull animal forsooth must be
Entreated, managed ! When can you contrive
The interview he demands ?

Auranthe. As speedily
It must be done as my brib'd woman can
Unseen conduct him to me ; but I fear
'Twill be impossible, while the broad day
Comes through the panes with persecuting glare.
Methinks, if 't now were night I could intrigue
With darkness, bring the stars to second me,
And settle all this trouble.

Conrad. Nonsense !- Child !
See him immediately ; why not now ?

Auranthe. Do you forget that even the senseless
- door-posts
Are on the watch and gape through all the
house ?

How many whisperers there are about,
Hungry for evidence to ruin me ;
Men I have spurn'd, and women I have taunted ?
Besides, the foolish prince sends, minute whiles,
His pages—so they tell me—to inquire
After my health, entreating, if I please,
To see me.

Conrad. Well, suppose this Albert here ;
What is your power with him ?

Auranthe. He should be
My echo, my taught parrot ! but I fear
He will be cur enough to bark at me ;
Have his own say ; read me some silly creed
'Bout shame and pity.

Conrad. What will you do then ?

Auranthe. What I shall do, I know not : what I
would

Cannot be done ; for see, this chamber-floor
Will not yield to the pickaxe and the spade,—
Here is no quiet depth of hollow ground.

Conrad. Sister, you have grown sensible and wise,
Seconding, ere I speak it, what is now,
I hope, resolv'd between us.

Auranthe. Say, what is 't ?

Conrad. You need not be his sexton too : a man
May carry that with him shall make him die . . .
Elsewhere,—give that to him ; pretend the while
You will to-morrow succumb to his wishes,
Be what they may, and send him from the Castle
On some fool's errand ; let his latest groan
Frighten the wolves !

Auranthe. Alas !- he must not die !

Conrad. Would you were both hears'd up in stifling
lead!

Detested—

Auranthe. Conrad, hold! I would not bear
The little thunder of your fretful tongue,
Tho' I alone were taken in these toils,
And you could free me; but remember, sir,
You live alone in my security:
So keep your wits at work, for your own sake,
Not mine, and be more mannerly.

Conrad. Thou wasp!
If my domains were emptied of these folk,
And I had thee to starve—

Auranthe. O, marvellous!
But, Conrad, now be gone; the host is look'd for;
Cringe to the emperor, entertain the lords,
And, do ye mind, above all things, proclaim
My sickness, with a brother's sadden'd eye,
Condoling with Prince Ludolph. In fit time
Return to me.

Conrad. I leave you to your thoughts. [*Exit*
Auranthe (*sola*). Down, down, proud temper
down, Auranthe's pride!

Why do I anger him when I should kneel?

Conrad! Albert! help! help! What can I do?

O wretched woman! lost, wreck'd, swallow'd up,

Accursed, blasted! O, thou golden crown,

Orbing along the serene firmament

Of a wide empire, like a glowing moon;

And thou, bright sceptre! lustrous in my eyes,—

There—as the fabled fair Hesperian tree,

Bearing a fruit more precious! graceful thing,

Delicate, godlike, magic! must I leave

Thee to melt in the visionary air,

Ere, by one grasp, this common hand is made

Imperial? I do not know—the time

When I have wept for sorrow; but methinks

I could now sit upon the ground, and shed

Tears, tears of misery. O, the heavy day !
 How shall I bear my life till Albert comes ?
 Ludolph ! Erminia ! Proofs ! O heavy day !
 Being me some mourning weed that I may 'tire
 Myself, as fits one wailing her own death :
 Cut off these curls, and brand this lily hand,
 And throw these jewels from my loathing sight,—
 Fetch me a missal, and a string of beads,—
 A cup of bitter'd water, and a crust,—
 I will confess, O holy abbot !—How !
 What is this ? Auranthe ! thou fool, dolt,
 Whimpering idiot ! up ! up ! act and quell !
 I am safe ! Coward ! why am I in fear ?
 Albert ! He cannot stickle, chew the cud
 In such a fine extreme,—impossible !
 Who knocks ? [*Goes to the door, listens, and opens it.*]

Enter ALBERT

Albert, I have been waiting for you here
 With such an aching heart, such swooning throbs
 On my poor brain, such cruel '—cruel sorrow,
 That I should claim your pity ! Art not well ?

Albert. Yes, lady, well.

Auranthe. You look not so, alas !

But pale, as if you brought some heavy news.

Albert. You know full well what makes me look so pale.

Auranthe. No ! Do I ? Surely I am still to learn
 Some horror ; all I know, this present, is
 I am near hustled to a dangerous gulf,
 Which you can save me from,—and therefore safe,
 So trusting in thy love ; that should not make
 Thee pale, my Albert.

Albert. It doth make me freeze.

Auranthe. Why should it, love ?

Albert. You should not ask me that,

But make your own heart monitor, and save
 Me the great pain of telling. You must know.

Auranthe. Something has vext you, Albert. There are times

When simplest things put on a sombre cast ;
A melancholy mood will haunt a man,
Until most easy matters take the shape
Of unachievable tasks ; small rivulets
Then seem impassable.

Albert. Do not cheat yourself
With hope that gloss of words, or suppliant action,
Or tears, or ravings, or self-threaten'd death,
Can alter my resolve

Auranthe. You make me tremble ;
Not so much at your threats, as at your voice,
Untun'd, and harsh, and barren of all love.

Albert. You suffocate me ! Stop this devil's parley,
And listen to me ; know me once for all

Auranthe. I thought I did - Alas ! I am deceiv'd.

Albert. No, you are not deceiv'd. You took me for
A man detesting all inhuman crime ;
And therefore kept from me your demon's plot
Against Erminia Silent ? Be so still ;
For ever ! Speak no more ; but hear my words,-
Thy fate Your safety I have bought to-day
By blazoning a lie, which in the dawn
I'll expiate with truth.

Auranthe. O cruel traitor !

Albert. For I would not set eyes upon thy shame ;
I would not see thee dragg'd to death by the hair,
Penanc'd, and taunted on a scaffolding !
To-night, upon the skirts of the blind wood
That blackens northward of these horrid towers,
I wait for you with horses. Choose your fate.
Farewell.

Auranthe. Albert, you jest ; I am sure you must.
You, an ambitious soldier ! I, a queen,
One who could say,—Here, rule these provinces !
Take tribute from these cities for thyself !
Empty these armouries, these treasures,

Muster thy warlike thousands at a nod !
Go ! conquer Italy !

Albert. Auranthe, you have made
The whole world chaff to me. Your doom is fix'd.

Auranthe. Out, villain ! dastard !

Albert. Look there to the door !
Who is it ?

Auranthe. Conrad, traitor !

Albert. Let him in.

[*Enter CONRAD.*

Do not affect amendment, hypocrite,
At seeing me in this chamber:

Conrad Auranthe ?

Albert. Talk not with eyes, but speak your curses out
Against me, who would sooner crush and grind
A brace of toads, than league with them to oppress
An innocent lady, gull an emperor,
More generous to me than autumn's sun
To ripening harvests.

Auranthe. No more insult, sir !

Albert. Ay, clutch your scabbard ; but, for prudence
sake,

Draw not the sword ; 'twould make an uproar, duke,
You would not hear the end-of. At nightfall
Your lady sister, if I guess aright,
Will leave this busy castle You had best
Take farewell too of worldly vanities.

Conrad. Vassal !

Albert. To-morrow, when the emperor sends
For loving Conrad, see you fawn on him.
Good-even !

Auranthe. You'll be seen !

Albert. See the coast clear then.

Auranthe (as he goes). Remorseless Albert ! Cruel,
cruel wretch ! [She lets him out.

Conrad So, we must lick the dust ?

Auranthe. I follow him.

Conrad. How ? Where ? The plan of your escape ?

Auranthe He waits
For me with horses by the forest-side,
Northward.

Conrad. Good, good ! he dies. You go, say you ?

Auranthe. Perforce.

Conrad. Be speedy, darkness ! Till that comes,
Fiends keep you company ! *[Exit.*

Auranthe. And you ! And you !
And all men ! Vanish !

[Retires to an inner Apartment.

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in the Castle*

Enter LUDOLPH and Page

Page. Still very sick, my lord ; but now I went
Knowing my duty to so good a prince ;
And there her women in a mournful throng
Stood in the passage whispering : if any
Mov'd, 'twas with careful steps and hush'd as death
They bid me stop.

Ludolph. Good fellow, once again
Make soft inquiry ; prythee, be not stay'd
By any hindrance, but with gentlest force
Break through her weeping servants, till thou com'st
E'en to her chamber door, and there, fair boy,
If with thy mother's milk thou hast suck'd in
Any diviner eloquence,—woo her ears
With plaints for me more tender than the voice
Of dying Echo, echoed.

Page. Kindest master !
To know thee sad thus, will unloose my tongue
In mournful syllables. Let but my words reach
Her ears, and she shall take them coupled with
Moans from my heart, and sighs not counterfeit.
May I speed better ! *[Exit Page.*

Ludolph (solus). *Auranthe !* My life
Long have I lov'd thee, yet till now not lov'd :

Remembering; as I do, hard-hearted times
 When I had heard e'en of thy death perhaps,
 And thoughtless, suffered to pass alone
 Into Elysium! now I follow thee
 A substance or a shadow, wheresoe'er
 Thou leadest me,—whether thy white feet press,
 With pleasant weight, the amorous-aching earth,
 Or thro' the air thou pioneerest me,
 A shade! Yet sadly I predestinate!
 O unbenignest Love, why wilt thou let
 Darkness steal out upon the sleepy world
 So wearily, as if night's chariot wheels
 Were clogg'd in some thick cloud? O, changeful
 Love,

Let not her steeds with drowsy-footed pace
 Pass the high stars, before sweet embassy
 Comes from the pillow'd beauty of that fair
 Completion of all delicate Nature's wit!
 Pout her faint lips anew with rubious health;
 And with thine-infant fingers lift the fringe
 Of her sick eyelids; that those eyes may glow
 With wooing light upon me, ere the morn
 Peers with disrelish, gray, barren, and cold.

Enter GERSA and Courtiers

Otho calls me his Lion—should I blush
 To be so tam'd, so——

Gersa. Do me the courtesy,
 Gentlemen, to pass on

First Knight. We are your servants

[Exeunt Courtiers.]

Ludolph. It seems, then, sir, you have found out the
 man

You would confer with; me?

Gersa. If I break not
 Too much upon your thoughtful mood, I will
 Claim a brief while your patience.

Ludolph For what cause
Soe'er, I shall be honour'd.

Gersa. I not less.

Ludolph. What may it be? No trifle can take place
Of such deliberate prologue, serious 'haviour.
But, be it what it may, I cannot fail
To listen with no common interest ;
'For though so new your presence is to me,
I have a soldier's friendship for your fame.
Please you explain.

Gersa As thus—for, pardon me,
I cannot in plain terms grossly assault
A noble nature ; and would faintly sketch
What your quick apprehension will fill up
So finely I esteem you.

Ludolph. I attend.

Gersa. Your generous father, most illustrious Otho,
Sits in the banquet-room among his chiefs ;
His wine is bitter, for you are not there ;
His eyes are fix'd still on the open doors,
And every passer in he frowns upon,
Seeing no *Ludolph* comes.

Ludolph. I do neglect.

Gersa. And for your absence, may I guess the
cause?

Ludolph Stay there ! no—guess? More princely
you must be
Than to make guesses at me. 'Tis enough.
I'm sorry I can hear no more.

Gersa. And I
As grieved to force it on you so abrupt ;
Yet, one day, you must know a grief whose sting
Will sharpen more the longer 'tis conceal'd.

Ludolph. Say it at once, sir ! dead—dead—is she
dead?

Gersa. Mine is a cruel task : she is not dead,
And would for your sake she were innocent.

Ludolph. Hungarian ! Thou amazest me beyond

Here underneath this roof where Otho breathes,

Thy father—almost mine—

Ludolph.

O faltering coward—

Re-enter PAGE

Stay, stay, here is one I have half a word with.

Well—what ails thee, child?

Page.

My lord —

Ludolph.

Good fellow!

Page. They are fled!

Ludolph.

They—who?

Page.

When anxiously

I hasten'd back, your grieving messenger,

I found the stairs all dark, the lamps extinct,

And not a foot or whisper to be heard.

I thought her dead, and on the lowest step

Sat listening; when presently came by

Two muffled up,—one sighing heavily,

The other cursing low, whose voice I knew

For the Duke Conrad's. Close I follow'd them

Thro' the dark ways they chose to the open air;

And, as I follow'd, heard my lady speak.

Ludolph. Thy life answers the truth!

Page.

The chamber's empty.

Ludolph. As I will be of mercy! So, at last,

This nail is in my temples!

Gersa.

Be calm in this.

Ludolph. I am.

Gersa.

And Albert too has disappear'd;

Ere I met you, I sought him everywhere;

You would not hearken.

Ludolph.

Which way went they, boy?

Gersa. I'll hunt with you.

Ludolph.

No, no, no. My senses are

Still whole. I have surviv'd. My arm is strong—

My appetite sharp—for revenge! I'll no sharer

In my feast; my injury is all my own;

And so is my revenge, my lawful chattels !
 Terrier, ferret them out ! Burn—burn the witch !
 Trace me their footsteps ! Away ! *[Exeunt.]*

ACT V

SCENE I.—*A part of the Forest*

Enter CONRAD and AURANTHE

Auranthe. Go no farther ; not a step more ; thou art
 A master plague in the midst of miseries.
 Go—I fear thee. I tremble every limb,
 Who never shook before. There's moody death
 In thy resolved looks ! Yes, I could kneel
 To pray thee far away. Conrad, go ! go !—
 There ! yonder underneath the boughs I see
 Our horses !

Conrad. Ay, and the man.

Auranthe. Yes, he is there.
 Go, go,—no blood, no blood ; go, gentle Conrad !

Conrad. Farewell !

Auranthe. Farewell ! For this Heaven pardon
 you ! *[Exit AURANTHE]*

Conrad. If he survive one hour, then may I die
 In unimagined tortures, or breathe through
 A long life in the foulest sink of the world !
 He dies ! 'Tis well she do not advertise
 The caitiff of the cold steel at his back.

[Exit CONRAD.]

Enter LUDOLPH and PAGE

Ludolph. Miss'd the way, boy ? Say not that on
 your peril !

Page. Indeed, indeed I cannot trace them farther.

Ludolph. Must I stop here ? Here solitary die ?
 Stifled beneath the thick oppressive shade

Ot these dull boughs,—this oven of dark thickets,—
 Silent,—without revenge?—pshaw!—bitter end.—
 A bitter death,—a suffocating death,—
 A gnawing—silent—deadly, quiet death!
 Escaped?—fled!—vanish'd? melted into air?
 She's gone! I cannot clutch her! no revenge!
 A muffled death, ensnar'd in horrid silence!
 Suck'd to my grave amid a dreamy calm!
 O, where is that illustrious noise of war,
 To smother up this sound of labouring breath,
 This rustle of the trees!

[AURANTHE shrieks at a distance.

Page.

My lord, a noise!

This way—hark!

Ludolph

Yes, yes! A hope! A music!

A glorious clamour! How I live again! [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.—*Another part of the Forest*

Enter ALBERT (wounded)

Albert. O for enough life to support me on
 To Otho's feet—

Enter LUDOLPH

Ludolph. Thrice villainous, stay there!
 Tell me where that detested woman is,
 Or this is through thee!

Albert. My good prince, with me
 The sword has done its worst; not without worst
 Done to another—Conrad has it home!
 I see you know it all!

Ludolph.

Where is his sister?

AURANTHE rushes in

Auranthe. Albert!

Ludolph. Ha! There! there! there!—He is the
 paramour!
 There—hug him—dying! O, thou innocence,

Shrine him and comfort him at his last gasp,
 Kiss down his eyelids ! Was he not thy love ?
 Wilt thou forsake him at his latest hour ?
 Keep fearful and aloof from his last gaze,
 His most uneasy moments, when cold death
 Stands with the door ajar to let him in ?

Albert. O that that door with hollow slam would
 close

Upon me sudden, for I cannot meet,
 In all the unknown chambers of the dead,
 Such horrors !

Ludolph. Auranthe ! what can he mean ?
 What horrors ? Is it not a joyous time ?
 Am I not married to a paragon
 'Of personal beauty and untainted soul' ?
 A blushing fair-eyed purity ! A sylph,
 Whose snowy timid hand has never sinn'd
 Beyond a flower pluck'd, white as itself ?
 Albert, you do insult my bride—your mistress—
 To talk of horrors on our wedding-night

Albert. Alas ! poor prince, I would you knew my
 heart.

'Tis not so guilty——

Ludolph. Hear, he pleads not guilty,
 You are not ? or, if so, what matters it ?
 You have escap'd me, free as the dusk air,
 Hid in the forest, safe from my revenge ;
 I cannot catch you ! You should laugh at me,
 Poor cheated Ludolph ! Make the forest hiss
 With jeers at me ! You tremble ; faint at once,
 You will come to again. O cockatrice,
 I have you. Whither wander those fair eyes
 To entice the devil to your help, that he
 May change you to a spider, so to crawl
 Into some cranny to escape my wrath ?

Albert. Sometimes the counsel of a dying man
 Doth operate quietly when his breath is gone :
 Disjoin those hands—part—part, do not destroy

Each other—forget her!—Our miseries
Are equal shared, and mercy is—

Ludolph

A boon

When one can compass it.—Auranthe, try
Your oratory; your breath is not so hitch'd.

Ay, stære for help—

[*ALBERT dies.*

There goes a-spotted soul

Howling in vain along the hollow night!

Hear him! He calls you—Sweet Auranthe, come!

Auranthe. Kill me.

Ludolph. No! What? upon our marriage-night!

The earth would shudder at so foul a deed!

A fair bride! a sweet bride! an innocent bride!

No, we must revel it, as 'tis in use

In times of delicate brilliant ceremony:

Come, let me lead you to our halls again!

Nay, linger not—make no resistance sweet;—

Will you? Ah, wretch, thou canst not; for I have

The strength of twenty lions 'gainst a lamb—

Now—one adieu for Albert!—come away! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*An inner Court of the Castle*

Enter SIGIFRED, GONFRED, and THEODORE meeting.

Theodore Was ever such a night?

Sigifred

What horrors more?

Things unbelieved one hour, so strange they are,

The next hour stamps with credit.

First Knight.

Your last news?

Gonfred. After the page's story of the death
Of Albert and Duke Conrad?

Sigifred

And the return

Of Ludolph with the princess.

Gonfred.

No more, save

Prince Gersa's freeing Abbot Ethelbert,

And the sweet lady, fair Erminia,

From prison.

First Knight. Where are they now? Hast yet heard?

Gonfred. With the sad emperor they are closeted;
I saw the three pass slowly up the stairs,
The lady weeping, the old abbot cowl'd.

Sigifred. What next?

First Knight. I ache to think on 't.

Gonfred. 'Tis with fate.

First Knight. One while these proud towers are
hush'd as death.

Gonfred. The next our poor prince fills the arched
rooms

With ghastly ravings.

Sigifred. I do fear his brain.

Gonfred. I will see more. Bear you so stout a
heart?

[*Exeunt into the Castle.*]

SCENE IV.—*A Cabinet, opening towards a Terrace*

OTHO, ERMINIA, ETHELBERT, and a Physician, discovered

Otho. O, my poor boy! my son! my son! my
Ludolph!

Have ye no comfort for me, ye physicians
Of the weak body and soul?

Ethelbert. 'Tis not the medicine,
Either of heaven or earth, to cure, unless
Fit time be chosen to administer.

Otho. A kind forbearance, holy abbot—come,
Erminia; here, sit by me, gentle girl;
Give me thy hand; hast thou forgiven me?

Erminia. Would I were with the saints to pray for
you!

Otho. Why will ye keep me from my darling child?

Physician. Forgive me, but he must not see thy
face.

Otho. Is then a father's countenance a Gorgon?
Hath it not comfort in it? Would it not

Console my poor boy, cheer him, heal his spirits?
Let me embrace him; let me speak to him;
I will—who hinders me? Who's emperor?

Physician. You may not, sire, 'twould overwhelm
him quite,
He is so full of grief and passionate wrath,
Too heavy a sigh would kill him, or do worse.
He must be sav'd by fine contrivances;
And, most especially, we must keep clear
Out of his sight a father whom he loves;
His heart is full, it can contain no more,
And do its ruddy office

Ethelbert. Sage advice;
We must endeavour how to ease and slacken
The tight-wound energies of his despair,
Not make them tenser.

Otho. Enough! I hear, I hear.
Yet you were about to advise more—I listen

Ethelbert. This learned doctor will agree with me,
That not in the smallest point should he be thwarted,
Or gainsaid by one word—his very motions,
Nods, becks, and hints, should be obey'd with care,
Even on the moment; so his troubled mind
May cure itself.

Physician. There is no other means.

Otho. Open the door; let's hear if all is quiet.

Physician. Beseech you, sire, forbear.

Erminia.

Do, do.

Otho.

I command!

Open it straight—hush!—quiet—my lost boy!
My miserable child!

Ludolph (indistinctly without). Fill, fill my goblet;—
Here's a health!

Erminia. O, close the door!

Otho. Let, let me hear his voice; this cannot last—
And fain would I catch up his dying words,
Though my own knell they be. This cannot last!
O let me catch his voice—for lo! I hear

A whisper in this silence that he's dead !
It is so. Gersa ?

Enter GERSA

Physician. Say, how fares the prince ?

Gersa. More calm ; his features are less wild and
flush'd ;

Once he complain'd of weariness.

Physician. Indeed !

'Tis good—'tis good—let him but fall asleep,
That saves him.

Otho. Gersa, watch him like a child—
Ward him from harm—and bring me better news !

Physician. Humour him to the height I fear to
go ;

For should he catch a glimpse of my dull garb,
It might affright him, fill him with suspicion
That we believe him sick, which must not be.

Gersa. I will invent what soothing means I can
[*Exit GERSA.*

Physician. This should cheer up your highness ;
weariness

Is a good symptom, and most favourable ;
It gives me pleasant hopes. Please you, walk forth
On to the terrace ; the refreshing air
Will blow one half of your sad doubts away. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*A Banqueting Hall, brilliantly illuminated,
and set forth with all costly magnificence, with
Supper-tables, laden with services of Gold and
Silver. A door in the back scene, guarded by two
Soldiers. Lords, Ladies, Knights, Gentlemen, etc.,
whispering sadly, and ranging themselves, part
entering and part discovered.*

First Knight. Grievously are we tantalised, one and
all ;

Sway'd here and there, commanded to and fro

As though we were the shadows of a sleep,
And link'd to a dreaming fancy What do we here?

Gonfred. I am no-seer; you know we must obey
The prince from A to Z, though it should be
To set the place in flames. I pray, hast heard
Where the most wicked princess is?

First Knight. There, sir,
In the next-room; have you remark'd those two
Stout soldiers posted at the door?

Gonfred. For what?

[*They whisper.*

First Lady. How ghast a train!

Second Lady. Sure this should be some splendid
burial.

First Lady. What fearful whispering! See, see,—
Gersa there!

Enter GERSA

Gersa. Put on your brightest looks; smile if you
can;

Behave as all were happy; keep your eyes
From the least watch upon him; if he speaks
To any one, answer collectedly,
Without surprise, his questions, how'er strange.
Do this to the utmost,—though, alas! with me
The remedy grows hopeless! Here he comes,—
Observe what I have said,—show no surprise.

Enter LUDOLPH, followed by SIGIFRED and Page.

Ludolph. A splendid company! rare beauties here!
I should have Orphean lips, and Plato's fancy,
Amphion's utterance, toned with his lyre,
Or the deep key of Jove's sonorous mouth,
To give fit salutation. Methought I heard,
As I came in, some whispers,—what of that?
'Tis natural men should whisper, at the kiss
Of Psyche given by Love, there was a buzz
Among the gods!—and silence is as natural.

Of even mould, felicitous and smooth—
 Cheeks fashion'd tenderly on either side,
 So perfect, so divine, that our poor eyes
 Are dazzled with the sweet proportioning,
 And wonder that 'tis so,—the magic chance!
 Her nostrils; small, fragrant, faery-delicate;
 Her lips—I swear no human bones e'er wore
 So taking a disguise—you shall behold her!
 We'll have her presently; ay, you shall see her,
 And wonder at her, friends, she is so fair—
 She is the world's chief jewel, and, by heaven,
 She's mine by right of marriage—she is mine!
 Patience, good people, in fit time I send
 A summoner—she will obey my call,
 Being a wife most mild and dutiful.
 First I would hear what music is prepared
 To herald and receive her; let me hear!

Sigisfred Bid the musicians soothe him tenderly.

[*A soft strain of Music.*]

Ludolph Ye have none better? No—I am content;
 'Tis a rich sobbing melody, with reliefs
 Full and majestic; it is well enough,
 And will be sweeter, when ye see her pace
 Sweeping into this presence, glisten'd o'er
 With emptied caskets, and her train upheld
 By ladies, habited in robes of lawn,
 Sprinkled with golden crescents, others bright
 In silks, with spangles shower'd, and bow'd to
 By duchesses and pearled margravines—
 Sad, that the fairest creature of the earth—
 I pray you mind me not—'tis sad, I say,
 That the extremest beauty of the world
 Should so entrench herself away from me,
 Behind a barrier of engender'd guilt!

Second Lady. Ah! what a moan!

First Knight.

Most piteous indeed!

Ludolph. She shall be brought before this company,
 And then—then—

First Lady. He muses.

Gersa. O, Fortune, where will this end?

Sigifred. I guess his purpose! Indeed he must not have

That pestilence brought in,—that cannot be,
There we must stop him.

Gersa. I am lost! Hush, hush!
He is about to rave again.

Ludolph. A barrier of guilt! I was the fool.
She was the cheater! Who's the cheater now,
And who the fool? The entrapp'd, the caged fool,
The bird-lim'd raven? She shall croak to death
Secure! Methinks I have her in my fist,
To crush her with my heel! Wait, wait! I marvel
My father keeps away. Good friend—ah! Sigifred!
Do bring him to me,—and Erminia,
I fain would see before I sleep—and Ethelbert,
That he may bless me, as I know he will,
Though I have curs'd him.

Sigifred. Rather suffer me
To lead you to them.

Ludolph. No, excuse me, no—
The day is not quite done. Go, bring them hither.
[Exit SIGIFRED.]

Certes, a father's smile should, like sunlight,
Slant on my sheafed harvest of ripe bliss.
Besides, I thirst to pledge my lovely bride
In a deep goblet: let me see—what wine?
The strong Iberian juice, or mellow Greek?
Or pale Calabrian? Or the Tuscan grape?
Or of old Ætna's pulpy wine presses,
Black stain'd with the fat vintage, as it were
The purple slaughter-house, where Bacchus' self
Prick'd his own swollen veins? Where is my page?

Page. Here, here!

Ludolph. Be ready to obey me; anon thou shalt
Bear a soft message for me, for the hour
Draws near when I must make a winding up

Of bridal mysteries—a fine-spun vengeance !
Carve it on my tomb, that when I rest beneath
Men shall confess, this prince was gull'd and cheated,
But from the ashes of disgrace he rose
More than a fiery dragon, and did burn
His ignominy up in purging fires !
Did I not send, sir, but a moment past,
For my father ?

Gersa. You did.

Ludolph. Perhaps 'twould be
Much better he came not.

Gersa. He enters now !

*Enter OTHO, ERMINIA, ETHELBERT, SIGIFRED, and
Physician*

Ludolph. O thou good man, against whose sacred
head

I was a mad conspirator, chiefly too
For the sake of my fair newly-wedded wife,
Now to be punish'd !—do not look so sad !
Those charitable eyes will thaw my heart,
Those tears will wash away a just resolve,
A verdict ten times sworn !—Awake—awake—
Put on a judge's brow, and use a tongue
Made iron-stern by habit ! Thou shalt see
A deed to be applauded, 'scribed in gold !
Join a loud voice to mine, and so denounce
What I alone will execute !

Otho. Dear son,
What is it ? By your father's love, I sue
That it be nothing-merciless !

Ludolph. To that demon ?
No so ! No ! She is in temple-stall
Being garnish'd for the sacrifice, and I,
The Priest of Justice, will immolate her
Upon the altar of wrath ! She stings me through !—
Even as the worm doth feed upon the nut,

So she, a scorpion, preys upon my brain !
 I feel her gnawing here ! Let her but vanish,
 Then, father, I will lead your legions forth,
 Compact in steeled squares, and speared files,
 And bid our trumpets speak a fell rebuke
 To nations drowsed in peace !

Otho. To-morrow, son,
 Be your word law ; forget to-day——

Ludolph. I will
 When I have finish'd it ! Now ! now ! I'm pight,
 Tight-footed for the deed !

Erminia. Alas ! Alas !

Ludolph. What Angel's voice is that ? *Erminia*
 Ah ! gentlest creature, whose sweet innocence
 Was almost murder'd ; I am penitent,
 Wilt thou forgive me ? And thou, holy man,
 Good Ethelbert, shall I die in peace with you ?

Erminia. Die, my lord !

Ludolph. I feel it possible.

Otho. Physician ?

Physician. I fear me he is past my skill.

Otho. Not so !

Ludolph. I see it !—I see it—I have been wandering—
 Half-mad—not right here—I forget my purpose.

Bestir, bestir, Auranthe ! Ha ! ha ! ha !

Youngster ! Page ! go bid them drag her to me !

Obey ! This shall finish it ! [*Draws a Dagger.*]

Otho. O, my son ! my son !

Sigfred. This must not be—stop there !

Ludolph. Am I obey'd ?
 A little talk with her—no harm—haste ! haste !

[*Exit Page*]

Set her before me—never fear I can strike.

Several Voices. My lord ! My lord !

Gersa. Good prince !

Ludolph. Why do you trouble me ? out—out—out
 away !

There she is ! take that ! and that ! no. no—

That's not well done.—Where is she?

[The doors open. Enter Page. Several women are seen grouped about Auranthe in the inner room.]

Page. Alas! My lord, my lord! they cannot move her!

Her arms are stiff,—her fingers clench'd and cold——

Ludolph. She's dead!

[Staggers and falls into their arms.]

Ethelbert.

Take away the dagger.

Gersa

Softly; so!

Otho Thank God for that!

Sigifred.

I fear it could not harm him.

Gersa. No!—brief be his anguish!

Ludolph. She's gone! I am content.—Nobles, good-night!

We are all weary—faint—set open the doors—

I will to bed!—To-morrow——

[Dies.]

THE CURTAIN FALLS

KING STEPHEN

A DRAMATIC FRAGMENT

ACT I

SCENE I.—*Field of Battle*

Alarum. Enter King STEPHEN, Knights, and Soldiers.

Stephen. If shame can on a soldier's vein-swollen
front

Spread deeper crimson than the battle's toil,
Blush in your casing helmets! for see, see!
Yonder my chivalry, my pride of war,
Wrench'd with an iron hand from firm array,
Are routed loose about the plashy meads,
Of honour forfeit. O, that my known voice
Could reach your coward ears, and fright you more!
Fly, cowards, fly! Gloucester is at your backs!
Throw your slack bridles o'er the flurried manes,
Fly well the rowel with faint trembling heels,
Scampering to death at last!

First Knight. The enemy
Bears his flaunt standard close upon their rear.

Second Knight. Sure of a bloody prey, seeing the fens
Will swamp them girth-deep.

Stephen. Over head and ears,
No matter! 'Tis a gallant enemy;
How like a comet he goes streaming on.
But we must plague him in the flank,—hey, friends?
We are well breathed,—follow!

Enter two Captains severally

First Captain. My lord !

Second Captain. Most noble earl !

First Captain. The king——

Second Captain. The empress greets——

Glocester. What of the king ?

First Captain. He sole and lone maintains

A hopeless bustle mid our swarming arms,

And with a numble savageness attacks,

Escapes, makes fiercer onset, then anew

Eludes death, giving death to most that dare

Trespass within the circuit of his sword !

He must by this have fallen. Baldwin is taken ;

And for the Duke of Bretagne, like a stag

He flies, for the Welsh beagles to hunt down.

God save the empress !

Glocester. Now our dreaded queen :
What message from her highness ?

Second Captain. Royal Maud
From the throng'd towers of Lincoln hath look'd
down,

Like Pallas from the walls of Ilion,

And seen her enemies havock'd at her feet

She greets most noble Glocester from her heart,

Entreating him, his captains, and brave knights,

To grace a banquet. The high city gates

Are envious which shall see your triumph pass ;

The streets are full of music.

Enter Second Knight

Glocester. Whence come you ?

Second Knight. From Stephen, my good prince,—
Stephen ! Stephen !

Glocester. Why do you make such echoing of his
name ?

Second Knight. Because I think, my lord, he is no
man,

But a fierce demon, 'nointed safe from wounds,
And misbaptized with a Christian name.

Glocester. A mighty soldier! Does he still hold out?

Second Knight. He shames our victory. His valour
still

Keeps elbow-room amid our eager swords,
And holds our bladed falchions all aloof—
His gleaming battle-axe being slaughter sick,
Smote on the morion of a Flemish knight,
Broke short in his hand; upon the which he flung
The heft away with such a vengeful force,
It paunch'd the Earl of Chester's horse, who then
Spleen-hearted came in full career at him.

Glocester. Did no one take him at a vantage then?

Second Knight. Three then with tiger leap upon
him flew,

Whom; with his sword swift-drawn and nimbly held,
He stung away again, and stood to breathe,
Smiling. Anon upon him rush'd once more
A throng of foes, and in this renew'd strife,
My sword met his and snapp'd off at the hilt

Glocester. Come, lead me to this Mars—and let us
move

In silence, not insulting his sad doom
With clamorous trumpets. To the empress bear
My salutation as befits the time.

[*Exeunt GLOCESTER and Forces.*]

SCENE III.—*The Field of Battle.* Enter STEPHEN
unarmed.

Stephen. Another sword! And what if I could seize
One from Bellona's gleaming armoury,
Or choose the fairest of her sheaved spears!
Where are my enemies? Here, close at hand,
Here come the testy brood. O for a sword!
I'm faint—a biding sword! A noble sword!

A hedge-stake— or a ponderous stone to hurl
 With brawny vengeance, like the labourer Cain.
 Come on ! Farewell my kingdom, and all hail
 Thou superb, plum'd, and helmeted renown,
 All hail—I would not truck this brilliant day
 To rule in Pylos, with a Nestor's beard—
 Come on !

Enter DE KAIMS and Knights, etc.

De Kaims. Is 't madness, or a hunger after death,
 That makes thee thus unarm'd throw taunts at us ?
 Yield, Stephen, or my sword's point dips in
 The gloomy current of a traitor's heart.

Stephen. Do it, De Kaims, I will not budge an inch,

De Kaims. Yes, of thy madness thou shalt take
 the meed.

Stephen. Darest thou ?

De Kaims. How dare, against a man disarm'd ?

Stephen. What weapons has the lion but himself ?

Come not near me, De Kaims, for by the price
 Of all the glory I have won this day,
 Being a king, I will not yield alive
 To any but the second man of the realm,
 Robert of Gloucester.

De Kaims. Thou shalt vail to me.

Stephen. Shall I, when I have sworn against it, sir ?
 Thou think'st it brave to take a breathing king,
 That, on a court-day bow'd to haughty Maud,
 The awed presence-chamber may be bold
 To whisper, there's the man who took alive
 Stephen—me—prisoner. Certes, De Kaims,
 The ambition is a noble one.

De Kaims. 'Tis true,
 And, Stephen, I must compass it.

Stephen. No, no.
 Do not tempt me to throttle you on the gorge,
 Or with my gauntlet crush your hollow breast,

Just when your knighthood is grown ripe and full
For lordship.

A Soldier. Is an honest yeoman's spear
Of no use at a need? Take that.

Stephen. Ah, dastard!

De Kaims. What, you are vulnerable! my prisoner!

Stephen. No, not yet. I disclaim it, and demand
Death as a sovereign right unto a king
Who 'sdauns to yield to any but his peer,
If not in title, yet in noble deeds,
The Earl of Gloucester. Stab to the hilt, De Kaims,
For I will never by mean hands be led
From this so famous field. Do ye hear? Be quick!

[*Trumpets. Enter the Earl of CHESTER and Knights.*

SCENE IV.—*A Presence Chamber. Queen MAUD in
a Chair of State, the Earls of GLOUCESTER and
CHESTER, Lords, Attendants*

Maud. Gloucester, no more: I will behold that
Boulogne:

Set him before me. Not for the poor sake
Of regal pomp and a vain-glorious hour,
As thou with wary speech, yet near enough,
Has hinted.

Gloucester. Faithful counsel have I given;
If wary, for your highness' benefit.

Maud. The heavens forbid that I should not think so,
For by thy valour have I won this realm,
Which by thy wisdom I will ever keep.

To sage advisers let me ever bend

A meek attentive ear, so that they treat
Of the wide kingdom's rule and government,
Not trenching on our actions personal.

Advis'd, not school'd, I would be; and henceforth
Spoken to in clear, plain, and open terms,
Not sideways sermon'd at

Glocester. Then, in plain terms,
Once more for the fallen king——

Maud. Your pardon, brother,
I would no more of that ; for, as I said,
'Tis not for worldly pomp I wish to see
The rebel, but as dooming judge to give
A sentence something worthy of his guilt.

Glocester. If 't must be so, I'll bring him to your
presence. *[Exit GLOCESTER.]*

Maud. A meaner summoner might do as well——
My Lord of Chester, is 't true what I hear
Of Stephen of Boulogne, our prisoner,
That he, as a fit penance for his crimes,
Eats wholesome, sweet, and palatable food
Off Gloucester's golden dishes—drinks pure wine,
Lodges soft ?

Chester. More than that, my gracious queen,
Has anger'd me. The noble earl, methinks,
Full soldier as he is, and without peer
In counsel, dreams too much among his books.
It may read well, but sure 'tis out of date
To play the Alexander with Darius.

Maud. Truth ! I think so. By heavens it shall not
last !

Chester. It would amaze your highness now to mark
How Gloucester overstrains his courtsey
To that crime-loving rebel, that Boulogne——

Maud. That ingrate !

Chester. For whose vast ingratitude
To our late sovereign lord, your noble sire,
The generous earl condoles in his mishaps,
And with a sort of lackeying friendliness,
Talks of the mighty frowning from his brow,
Woos him to hold a duet in a smile,
Or, if it please him, play an hour at chess——

Maud. A perjured slave !

Chester. And for his perjury,
Glocester has fit rewards—nay, I believe,

He sets his bustling household's wits at work
For flatteries to ease this Stephen's hours,
And make a heaven of his purgatory ;
Adorning bondage with the pleasant gloss
Of feasts and music, and all idle shows
Of indoor pageantry ; while syren whispers,
Predestin'd for his ear, 'scape as half-check'd
From lips the courtliest and the rubiest
Of all the realm, admiring of his deeds.

Maud. A frost upon his summer !

Chester.

A queen's nod

Can make his June December. Here he comes.

THE CAP AND BELLS
OR THE JEALOUSIES

A FAERY TALE. UNFINISHED

I

IN midmost Ind, beside Hydaspes cool,
There stood, or hover'd, tremulous in the air,
A faery city, 'neath the potent rule
Of Emperor Elfinan; fam'd ev'rywhere
For love of mortal women, maidens fair,
Whose lips were solid, whose soft hands were made
Of a fit mould and beauty, ripe and rare,
To pamper his slight wooing, warm yet staid:
He lov'd girls smooth as shades, but hated a mere
shade.

II

This was a crime forbidden by the law;
And all the priesthood of his city wept,
For ruin and dismay they well foresaw,
If impious prince no bound or limit kept,
And faery Zendervester overstept;
They wept, he sinn'd, and still he would sin on,
They dreamt of sin, and he sinn'd while they slept;
In vain the pulpit thunder'd at the throne,
Caricature was vain, and vain the tart lampoon.

III

Which seeing, his high court of parliament
Laid a remonstrance at his highness' feet,
Praying his royal senses to content
Themselves with what in faery land was sweet,
Befitting best that shade with shade should meet:

Whereat, to calm their fears, he promis'd soon
 From 'mortal tempters all to make retreat,—
 Ay, even on the first of the new moon,
 In immaterial wife to espouse as heaven's boon.

IV

Meantime he sent a fluttering embassy
 To Pigmio, of Imaus sovereign,
 To half beg, and half demand, respectfully,
 The hand of his fair daughter Bellanaine;
 An audience had, and speeching done, they gain
 Their point, and bring the weeping bride away;
 Whom, with' but one attendant, safely lain
 Upon their wings, they bore in bright array,
 While little harps were touch'd by many a lyric fay.

V

As in old pictures tender cherubim
 A child's soul thro' the sapphir'd canyās bear,
 So, thro' a real heaven, on they swim
 With the sweet princess on her plumaged lair,
 Speed giving to the winds her lustrous hair;
 And so she journey'd, sleeping or awake,
 Save when, for healthful exercise and air,
 She chose to *promener à l'aile*, or take
 A pigeon's somerset, for sport or change's sake.

VI

'Dear Princess, do not whisper me so loud,'
 Quoth Coralline, nurse and confidante,
 'Do not you see there, lurking in a cloud,
 Close at your back, that sly old Crafticant?
 He hears a whisper plainer than a rant:
 Dry up your tears, and do not look so blue;
 He's Elfinan's great state-spy militant,
 His running, lying, flying footman too,—
 Dear mistress, let him have no handle against you!

VII

' Show him a mouse's tail, and he will guess,
With metaphysic swiftness, at the mouse,
Show him a garden, and with speed no less,
He'll surmise sagely of a dwelling-house,
And plot, in the same minute, how to choose
The owner out of it; show him a——' 'Peace!
Peace! nor contrive thy mistress' ire to rouse!'
Return'd the Princess, 'my tongue shall not cease
Till from this hated match I get a free release.

VIII

' Ah, beauteous mortal!' 'Hush!' quoth Coralline,
' Really you must not talk of him, indeed.'
' You hush!' replied the mistress, with a shine
Of anger in her eyes, enough to breed
In stouter hearts than nurse's fear and dread.
'Twas not the glance itself made nursey flinch,
But of its threat she took the utmost heed;
Not liking in her heart an hour-long pinch,
Or a sharp needle run into her back an inch.

IX

So she was silenc'd, and fair Bellanaine,
Writhing her little body with ennui,
Continued to lament and to complain;
That Fate, cross-purposing, should let her be
Ravished away far from her dear countree;
That all her feelings should be set at naught,
In trumping up this match so hastily,
With lowland blood; and lowland blood she thought
Poison, as every staunch true-born Imaian ought.

X

Sorely she griev'd, and wetted three or four
 White Provence rose-leaves with her taery tears,
 But not for this cause ;—alas ! she had more
 Bad reasons for her sorrow, as appears
 In the fam'd memoirs of a thousand years,
 Written by Crafticant, and published
 By Parpaglion and Co. (those sly compeers
 Who rak'd up every fact against the dead),
 In Scarab Street, Panthea, at the Jubal's Head.

XI

Where, after a long hypercritic howl
 Against the vicious manners of the age,
 He goes on to expose, with heart and soul,
 What vice in this or that year was the rage,
 Backbiting all the world in every page,
 With special strictures on the horrid crime
 (Section'd and subsection'd with learning sage),
 Of faeries stooping on their wings sublime
 To kiss a mortal's lips, when such were in their prime.

XII

Turn to the copious index, you will find
 Somewhere in the column, headed letter B,
 The name of Bellanaine, if you're not blind ;
 Then pray refer to the text, and you will see
 An article made up of calumny
 Against this highland princess, rating her
 For giving way, so over-fashionably,
 To this new-fangled vice, which seems a burr
 Stuck in his moral throat, no coughing e'er could stir.

XIII

There he says plainly that she lov'd a man !
That she around him flutter'd, flirted, toy'd,
Before her marriage with great Elfinan ;
That after marriage too, she never joy'd
In husband's company, but still employ'd
Her wits to 'scape away to Angle-land ;
Where liv'd the youth, who worried and annoy'd
Her tender heart, and its warm ardours fann'd
To such a dreadful blaze, her side would scorch her
hand.

XIV

But let us leave this idle tittle-tattle
To waiting-maids, and bedroom coteries,
Nor till fit time against her fame wage battle.
Poor Elfinan is very ill at ease,
Let us resume his subject if you please :
For it may comfort and console him much
To rhyme and syllable his miseries ;
Poor Elfinan ! whose cruel fate was such,
He sat and curs'd a bride he knew he could not touch.

XV

Soon as (according to his promises)
The bridal embassy had taken wing,
And vanish'd, bird-like, o'er the suburb trees,
The Emperor, empierc'd with the sharp sting
Of love, retired, vex'd and murmuring
Like any drone shut from the fair bee-queen,
Into his cabinet, and there did fling
His limbs upon a sofa, full of spleen,
And damn'd his House of Commons, in complete
chagrin.

XVI

'I'll trounce some of the members,' cried the Prince,
'I'll put a mark against some rebel names,
I'll make the Opposition-benches wince,
I'll show them very soon, to all their shames,
What 'tis to smother up a Prince's flames;
That ministers should join in it, I own,
Surprises me!—they too at these high games!
Am I an Emperor? Do I wear a crown?
Imperial Elfinan, go hang thyself or drown!

XVII

'I'll trounce 'em!—there's the square-cut chancellor,
His son shall never touch that bishopric;
And for the nephew of old Palfior,
I'll show him that his speech has made me sick,
And give the colonelcy to Phalaric;
The tiptoe marquis, moral and gallant,
Shall lodge in shabby taverns upon tick;
And for the Speaker's second cousin's aunt,
She shan't be maid of honour,—by heaven that she
shan't!

XVIII

"I'll shirk the Duke of A.; I'll cut his brother;
I'll give no garter to his eldest son;
I won't speak to his sister or his mother!
The Viscount B. shall live at cut-and-run;
But how in the world can I contrive to stun
That fellow's voice, which plagues me worse than
any,
That stubborn fool, that impudent state-dun,
Who sets down ev'ry sovereign as a zany,—
That vulgar commoner, Esquire Biancopany?

XIX

' Monstrous affair ! Pshaw ! pah ! what ugly minx
 Will they fetch from Imaus for my bride ?
 Alas ! my wearied heart within me sinks,
 To think that I must be so near allied
 To a cold dullard fay,—ah, woe betide !
 Ah, fairest of all human loveliness !
 Sweet Bertha ! what crime can it be to glide
 About the fragrant pleatings of thy dress,
 Or kiss thine eyes, or count thy locks, tress after
 tress ? '

XX

So said, one minute's while his eyes remain'd
 Half lidded, piteous, languid, innocent ;
 But, in a wink, their splendour they regain'd,
 Sparkling revenge with amorous fury blent.
 Love-thwarted in bad temper oft has vent
 He rose, he stamp'd his foot, he rang the bell,
 And order'd some death-warrants to be sent
 For signature :—somewhere the tempest fell.
 As many a poor felon does not live to tell.

XXI

' At the same time Eban '—(this was his page,
 A fay of colour, slave from top to toe,
 Sent as a present, while yet under age,
 From the Viceroy of Zanguebar,—wise, slow,
 His speech, his only words were ' yes ' and ' no,'
 But swift of look, and foot, and wing was he)—
 ' At the same time, Eban, this instant go
 To Hum the soothsayer, whose name-I see
 Among the fresh arrivals in our empery

XXII

'Bring Hum to me ! But stay—here, take my ring,
 The pledge of favour, that he not suspect
 Any foul play, or awkward murdering,
 Tho' I have bow-strung many of his sect ;
 Throw in a hint, that if he should neglect
 One hour, the next shall see him in my grasp,
 And the next after that shall see him neck'd,
 Or swallow'd by my hunger-starv'd asp,—
 I'd mention ('tis as well) the torture of the wasp.'

XXIII

These orders given, the Prince, in half a pet,
 Let o'er the silk his propping-elbow slide,
 Caught up his little legs, and, in a fret,
 Fell on the sofa on his royal side.
 The slave retreated backwards, humble-eyed,
 And with a slave-like silence closed the door,
 And to old Hum thro' street and alley hied ;
 He 'knew the city,' as we say, of yore,
 And for short cuts and turns, was nobody knew more.

XXIV

It was the time when wholesale houses close
 Their shutters with a moody sense of wealth,
 But retail dealers, diligent, let loose
 The gas (objected to on score of health),
 Convey'd in little solder'd pipes by stealth,
 And make it flare in many a brilliant form,
 That all the powers of darkness it repell'th,
 Which to the oil-trade doth great scaith and harm,
 And supersedeth quite the use of the glow-worm.

XXV

Eban, untempted by the pastry-cooks
 (Of pastry he got store within the palace),
 With hasty steps, wrapp'd cloak, and solemn looks,
 Incognito upon his errand sallies,
 His smelling-bottle ready for the allies ;
 He passed the hurdy-gurdies with disdain,
 Vowing he'd have them sent aboard the galleys ;
 Just as he made his vow, it 'gan to rain,
 Therefore he call'd a coach, and bade it drive amain.

XXVI

'I'll pull the string,' said he, and further said,
 'Polluted jarvey ! Ah, thou filthy hack !
 Whose springs of life are all dried up and dead,
 Whose linsey-woolsey lining hangs all slack,
 Whose rug is straw, whose wholeness is a crack ;
 And evermore thy steps go clatter-clitter ;
 Whose glass once up can never be got back,
 Who prov'st, with jolting arguments and bitter,
 That 'tis of modern use to travel in a litter.

XXVII

'Thou inconvenience ! thou hungry crop
 For all corn ! thou snail-creeper to and fro,
 Who while thou goest ever seem'st to stop,
 And fiddle-faddle standest while you go ;
 I' the morning, freighted with a weight of woe,
 Unto some lazar-house thou journeyest,
 And in the evening tak'st a double row
 Of dowdies, for some dance or party drest,
 Besides the goods meanwhile thou movest east and
 west

XXVIII

'By thy ungallant bearing and sad mien,
An inch appears the utmost thou couldst budge;
Yet at the slightest nod, or hint, or sign,
Round to the curbstone patient dost thou trudge
School'd in a beckon, learn'd in a nudge,
A dull-eyed Argus watching for a fare,
Quiet and plodding, thou dost bear no grudge
To whisking Tilburies, or Phaetons rare,
Curricles, or Mail-coaches, swift beyond compare.'

XXIX

Philosophising thus, he pull'd the check,
And bade the Coachman wheel to such a street,
Who, turning much his body, more his neck,
Louted full low, and hoarsely did him greet:
'Certes, Monsieur were best take to his feet,
Seeing his servant can no farther drive
For press of coaches, that to-night here meet
Many as bees about a straw-capp'd hive,
When first for April honey into faint flowers they dive.'

XXX

Eban then paid his fare, and tip-toe went
To Hum's hôtel; and, as he on did pass
With head inclin'd, each dusky lineament
Show'd in the pearl-pav'd street, as in a glass;
His purple vest, that ever peeping was
Rich from the fluttering crimson of his cloak,
His silvery trowsers, and his silken sash
Tied in a burnish'd knot, their semblance took
Upon the mirror'd walls, wherever he might look.

XXXVII

'I thought you guess'd, foretold, or prophesied,
 That's Majesty was in a raving fit?'
 'He dreams,' said Hum, 'or I have ever lied,
 That he is tearing you, sir, bit by bit.'
 'He's not asleep, and you have little wit,'
 Replied the page: 'that little buzzing noise,
 Whate'er your palmistry may make of it,
 Comes from a plaything of the Emperor's choice,
 From a Man-Tiger-Organ, prettiest of his toys.'

XXXVIII

Eban then usher'd in the learned Seer:
 Elfinan's back was turn'd, but, ne'ertheless,
 Both, prostrate on the carpet, ear by ear,
 Crept silently, and waited in distress,
 Knowing the Emperor's moody bitterness;
 Eban especially, who on the floor 'gan
 Tremble and quake to death,—he feared less
 A dose of senna-tea or nightmare Gorgon
 Than the emperor when he play'd on his Man-Tiger-
 Organ.

XXXIX

They kiss'd nine times the carpet's velvet face
 Of glossy silk, soft, smooth, and meadow-green,
 Where the close eye in deep rich fur might trace
 A silver tissue, scantily to be seen,
 As daisies lurk'd in June-grass, buds in green;
 Sudden the music ceased, sudden the hand
 Of majesty, by dint of passion keen,
 Doubled into a common fist, went grand,
 And knock'd down three cut glasses, and his best ink-
 stand.

XL

Then turning round, he saw those trembling two :
 'Eban,' said he, 'as slaves should taste the fruits
 Of diligence, I shall remember you
 To-morrow, or the next day, as time suits,
 In a finger conversation with my mutes,—
 Begone!—for you, Chaldean! here remain!
 Fear not, quake not, and as good wine recruits
 A conjurer's spirits, what cup will you drain?
 Sherry in silver, hock in gold, or glass'd champagne?'

XLI

'Commander of the Faithful!' answer'd Hum,
 'In preference to these, I'll merely taste
 A thimble-full of old Jamacia rum.'
 'A simple boon!' said Elfinan; 'thou may'st
 Have Nantz, with which my morning-coffee's lac'd'
 'I'll have a glass of Nantz, then,'—said the Seer,—
 'Made racy—(sure my boldness is misplac'd!)—
 With the third part—(yet that is drinking dear!)—
 Of the least drop of *crème de citron*, crystal clear.'

XLII

'I pledge you, Hum! and pledge my dearest love,
 My Bertha!' 'Bertha! Bertha!' cried the sage,
 'I know a many Berthas!' 'Mine's above
 All Berthas!' sighed the Emperor. 'I engage,'
 Said Hum, 'in duty, and in vassalage,
 To mention all the Berthas in the Earth;—
 There's Bertha Watson,—and Miss Bertha Page,—
 This fam'd for languid eyes, and that for mirth,—
 There's Bertha Blount of York,—and Bertha Knox of
 Perth.'

XLIII

'You seem to know'—'I do know,' answer'd Hum,
 'Your Majesty's in love with some fine girl
 Named Bertha; but her surname will not come,
 Without a little conjuring.' 'Tis Pearl,
 'Tis Bertha Pearl that makes my brains so whirl;
 And she is softer, fairer than her name!
 'Where does she live?' ask'd Hum. 'Her fair-
 locks curl

So brightly, they put all our fays to shame!—
 Live?—O! at Canterbury, with her old grand-dame.'

XLIV

'Good! good!' cried Hum, 'I've known her from
 a child!
 She is a changeling of my management;
 She was born at midnight in an Indian wild;
 Her mother's screams with the striped-tiger's blent,
 While the torch-bearing slaves a halloo sent
 Into the jungles; and her palanquin,
 Rested amid the desert's dreariment,
 Shook with her agony, till fair were seen
 The little Bertha's eyes oped on the stars serene.'

XLV

'I can't say,' said the monarch; 'that may be
 Just as it happen'd, true or else a bam'
 Drink up your brandy, and sit down by me;
 Feel, feel my pulse, how much in love-I am;
 And if your science is not all a sham,
 Tell me some means to get the lady here.'
 'Upon my honour!' said the son of Cham,
 'She is my dainty changeling, near and dear,
 Although her story sounds at first a little queer.'

XLVI

'Convey her to me, Hum, or by my crown,
 My sceptre, and my cross-surmounted globe,
 I'll knock you——' 'Does your majesty mean—*down?*
 No, no, you never could my feelings probe
 To such a depth!' The Emperor took his robe,
 And wept upon its purple palatine,
 While Hum continued, shamming half a sob,—
 'In Canterbury doth your lady shine?
 But let me cool your brandy with a little wine.'

XLVII

Whereat a narrow Flemish glass he took,
 That once belong'd to Admirál de Witt,
 Admired it with a connoisseuring look,
 And with the ripest claret crown'd it,
 And; ere one lively bead could burst and flit,
 He turn'd it quickly, nimbly upside down,
 His mouth being held conveniently fit
 To catch the treasure. 'Best in all the town!'

He said, smack'd his moist lips, and gave a pleasant
 frown.

XLVIII

'Ah! my good Prince, weep not!' And then again
 He fill'd a bumper. 'Great sire, do not weep!
 Your pulse is shocking, but I'll ease your pain!
 'Fetch me that Ottomán, and prithee keep
 Your voice low,' said the Emperor; 'and steep
 Some lady's fingers nice in Candy wine;
 And prithee, Hum, behind the screen do peep
 For the rose-water vase, magician mine!
 And sponge my forehead,—so my love doth make me
 pine.

XLIX

' Ah, cursed Bellanaine ! ' ' Don't think of her,'
 Rejoin'd the Mago, ' but on Bertha muse,
 For, by my choicest best barometer,
 You shall not throttled be in marriage noose;
 I've said it, sire; you only have to choose
 Bertha or Bellanaine.' So saying, he drew
 From the left pocket of his threadbare hose,
 A sampler hoarded slyly, good as new,
 Holding it by his thumb and finger full in view.

L

' Sire, this is Bertha Pearl's neat handiwork,
 Her name, see here, *Midsummer, ninety-nine.*'
 Elfinan snatch'd it with a sudden jerk,
 And wept as if he never would have done,
 Honouring with royal tears the poor homespun;
 Whereon were broider'd tigers with black eyes,
 And long-tail'd pheasants, and a rising sun,
 Plenty of posies, great stags, butterflies
 Bigger than stags,—a moon,—with other mysteries

LI

The monarch handled o'er and o'er again
 These day-school hieroglyphics with a sigh;
 Somewhat in sadness, but pleas'd in the main,
 Till this oracular couplet met his eye
 Astounded—*Cupid I, do thee defy!*
 It was too much. He shrunk back in his chair,
 Grew pale as death, and fainted—very nigh!
 ' Pho! nonsense!' exclaim'd Hum, ' now don't
 despair;
 She does not mean it really. Cheer up hearty—there'

LII

'And listen to my words. You say you won't,
On any terms, marry Miss Bellanaine;
It goes against your conscience—good! Well,
don't.

You say, you love a mortal. I would fain
Persuade your honour's highness to refrain
From peccadilloës. But, sire, as I say,
What good would that do? And, to be more plain,
You would do me a mischief some odd day.
Cut off my ears and hands, or head too, by my fay!

LIII

'Besides, manners forbid that I should pass any
Vile strictures on the conduct of a prince
Who should indulge his genius, if he has any,
Not, like a subject, foolish matters mince.
Now I think on 't, perhaps I could convince
Your majesty there is no crime at all
In loving pretty little Bertha, since
She's very delicate,—not over tall,—
A faery's hand, and in the waist, why—very small.'

LIV

'Ring the repeater, gentle Hum!' 'Tis five,
Said gentle Hum, 'the nights draw in-apace;
The little birds I hear are all alive;
I see the dawning touch'd upon your face;
Shall I put out the candles, please your Grace?'
'Do put them out, and, without more ado,
Tell me how I may that sweet girl embrace,—
How you can bring her to me.' 'That's for you.
Great Emperôr! to adventure, like a lover true.'

LV

'I fetch her!'—'Yes, an 't like your Majesty;
 And as she would be frighten'd wide awake
 To travel such a distance through the sky,
 Use of some soft manoeuvre you must make,
 For your convenience, and her dear nerves' sake;
 Nice way would be to bring her in a swoon,
 Anon, I'll tell what course were best to take;
 You must away this morning' 'Hum! so soon?'
 'Sire, you must be in Kent by twelve o'clock at noon'

LVI

At this great Cæsar started on his feet,
 Lifted his wings, and stood attentive-wise
 'Those wings to Canterbury you must beat,
 'If you hold Bertha as a worthy prize.
 Look in the Almanack—*Moore* never lies—
 April the twenty-fourth,—this coming day,
 Now breathing its new bloom upon the skies,
 Will end in St Mark's Eve;—you must away,
 For on that eve alone can you the maid convey.'

LVII

Then the magician solemnly 'gan frown,
 So that his frost-white eyebrows, beetling low,
 Shaded his deep-green eyes, and wrinkles brown
 Plaited upon his furnace-scorched brow:
 Forth from the hood that hung his neck below,
 He lifted a bright casket of pure gold,
 Touch'd a spring-lock, and there in wool or snow,
 Charm'd into ever-freezing, lay an old
 And legend-leaved book, mysterious to behold.

LVIII

'Take this same book,—it will not bite you, sire ;
 There, put it underneath your royal arm ;
 Though it's a pretty weight, it will not-tire,
 But rather on your journey keep you warm :
 This is the magic, this the potent charm,
 That shall drive Bertha to a fainting fit !
 When the time comes, don't feel the least alarm,
 Uplift her from the ground, and swiftly flit
 Back to your palace

LIX

'What shall I do with this same book?' 'Why
 merely
 Lay it on Bertha's table, close beside
 Her work-box, and 'twill help your-purpose dearly,
 I say no more.' 'Or good or ill betide,
 Through the wide air to Kent this morn I glide !'
 Exclaim'd the Emperor. 'When I return,
 Ask what you will,—I'll give you my new bride !
 And take some more wine, Hum ;—O Heavens !
 I burn
 To be upon the wing ! Now, now, that minx-I spurn !'

LX

'Leave her to me,' rejoind'd the magian :
 'But how-shall I account, illustrious fay !
 For thine imperial absence ? Pho ! I can
 Say you are very sick, and bar the way
 To your so loving courtiers for one day ;
 If either of their two archbishops' graces
 Should talk of extreme unction, I shall say
 You do not like cold pig with Latin phrases,
 Which never should be used but in alarming cases.

LXI

'Open the window, Hum; I'm ready now!
 'Zooks!' exclaim'd Hum, as up the sash he drew,
 'Behold, your majesty, upon the brow
 Of yonder hill, what crowds of people!' 'Where?
 The monster's always after something new,'
 Return'd his highness, 'they are piping hot
 To see my pigsney Bellanaine. Hum! do
 Tighten my belt a little,—so, so,—not
 Too tight,—the book!—my wand!—so, nothing is
 forgot.'

LXII

'Wounds! how they shout!' said Hum, 'and
 there,—see, see!
 The Ambassador's return'd from Pigmio!
 The morning's very fine,—uncommonly!
 See, past the skirts of yon white cloud they go,
 Tinging it with soft crimsons! Now below
 The sable-pointed heads of firs and pines
 They dip, move on, and with them moves a glow
 Along the forest side! Now amber lines
 Reach the hill-top, and now throughout the valley
 shines.'

LXIII

'Why, Hum, you're getting quite poetical!
 Those *novus* you managed in a special style.'
 'If ever you have leisure, sire, you shall.
 See scraps of mine will make it worth your while,
 Tit-bits for Phœbus!—yes, you well may smile.
 Hark! hark! the bells!' 'A little farther yet,
 Good Hum, and let me view this mighty coil'
 Then the great Emperor full graceful set
 His elbow for a prop, and snuff'd his mignonnette.

LXIV

The morn is full of holiday ; loud bells
With rival clamours ring from every spire ;
Cunningly-station'd music dies and swells
In echoing places ; when the winds respire,
Light flags stream out like gauzy tongues of fire ;
A metropolitan murmur, lifeful, warm,
Comes from the northern suburbs ; rich attire
Freckles with red and gold the moving swarm ;
While here and there clear trumpets blow a keen alarm

LXV

And now the fairy escort was seen clear,
Like the old pageant of Aurora's train,
Above a pearl-built minster, hovering near ;
First wily Crafticant, the chamberlain,
Balanc'd upon his gray-grown pinions twain,
His slender wand officially reveal'd ;
Then black gnomes scattering sixpences like rain ;
Then pages three and three , and next, slave-held,
The Imaian 'scutcheon bright,—one mouse in argent
field.

LXVI

Gentlemen pensioners next ; and after them,
A troop of winged Janizaries flew ,
Then slaves, as presents bearing many a gem ;
Then twelve physicians fluttering two and two ;
And next a chaplain in a cassock new ;
Then Lords in waiting ; then (what head not reels
For pleasure ?)—the fair Princess in full view,
Borne upon wings,—and very pleased she feels
To have such splendour dance attendance at her heels.

LXVII

For there was more magnificence behind :
 She waved her handkerchief. ' Ah, very grand !'
 Cried Elfinan, and closed the window-blind ;
 ' And, Hum, we must not shilly-shally stand,—
 Adieu ! adieu ! I'm off for Angle-land !
 I say, old Hocus, have you such a thing
 About you,—feel your pockets, I command,—
 I want, this instant, an invisible ring,—
 Thank you, old mummy !—now securely I take wing.'

LXVIII

Then Elfinan swift vaulted from the floor,
 And lighted graceful on the window-sill ;
 Under one arm the magic book he bore,
 The other he could wave about at will ;
 Pale was his face, he still look'd very ill :
 He bow'd at Bellanaine, and said—' Poor Bell !
 Farewell ! farewell ! and if for ever ' still
 For ever fare thee well !'—and then he fell
 A laughing !—snapp'd his fingers !—shame it is to tell !

LXIX

' By'r Lady ! he is gone !' cries Hum, ' and I—
 (I own it)—have made too free with his wine ;
 Old Crafticant will smoke me, by the bye !
 This room is full of jewels as a mine,—
 Dear valuable creatures, how ye shine !
 Sometime to-day I must contrive a minute,
 If Mercury propitiously incline,
 To examine his scrutoire, and see what's in it,
 For of superfluous diamonds I as well may thin it.

LXX

'The Emperor's horrid bad; yes, that's my cue!'—
 Some histories say that this was Hum's last speech;
 That, being fuddled, he went reeling through
 The corridor, and scarce upright could reach
 The stair-head, that being glutted as a leech,
 And used, as we ourselves have just now said;
 To manage stairs reversely, like a peach
 Too ripe, he fell, being puzzled in his head
 With liquor and the staircase: verdict—*found stone*
dead.

LXXI

This as a falsehood Crafticanto treats;
 And as his style is of strange elegance,
 Gentle and tender, full of soft conceits
 (Much like our Boswell's), we will take a glance
 At his sweet prose, and, if we can, make dance
 His woven periods into careless rhyme;
 O, little faëry Pegasus! rear—prance—
 Trot round the quarto—ordinary time!
 March, little Pegasus, with pawing hoof sublime!

LXXII

Well, let us see,—*tenth book and chapter nine*,—
 Thus Crafticant pursues his diary:—
 'Twas twelve o'clock at night, the weather fine,
 Latitude thirty-six; our scouts descri
 A flight of starlings making rapidly
 Towards Thibet. Mem:—birds fly in the night;
 From twelve to half-past—wings not fit to fly
 For a thick fog—the Princess sulky quite
 Called for an extra shawl, and gave her nurse a bite.

LXXIII

Five minutes before one—brought down a moth
With my new double-barrel—stew'd the thighs
And made a very tolerable broth—
Princess turn'd dainty, to our great surprise,
Alter'd her mind, and thought it very nice :
Seeing her pleasant, tried her with a pun,
She frown'd ; a monstrous owl across us flies
About this time,—a sad old figure of fun ,
Bad omen—this new match can't be a happy one.

LXXIV

From two till half-past, dusky way we made,
Above the plains of Gobi,—desert, bleak ,
Beheld afar off, in the hooded shade
Of darkness, a great mountain (strange to speak),
Spitting, from forth its sulphur-baken peak,
A fan-shap'd burst of blood-red, arrowy fire,
Turban'd with smoke, which still away did reek,
Solid and black from that eternal pyre,
Upon the laden wind that scantily could respire.

LXXV

Just upon three o'clock a falling star
Created an alarm among our troop,
Kill'd a man-cook, a page, and broke a jar,
A tureen, and three dishes, at one swoop,
Then passing by the Princess, sing'd her hoop :
Could not conceive what Coralline was at,
She clapp'd her hands three times and cried out
'Whoop !'

Some strange Imaian custom. A large bat
Came sudden 'fore my face, and brush'd against my hat.

LXXVI

Five minutes thirteen seconds after three,
Far in the west a mighty fire broke out,
Conjectur'd, on the instant, it might be
The city of Balk—'twas Balk beyond all doubt :
A griffin, wheeling here and there about,
Kept reconnoitring us—doubled our guard—
Lighted our torches, and kept up a shout,
Till he sheer'd off—the Princess very scared—
And many on their marrow-bones for death prepared.

LXXVII

At half-past three arose the cheerful moon—
Bivouack'd for four minutes on a cloud—
Where from the earth we heard a lively tune
Of tambourines and pipes, serene and loud,
While on a flowery lawn a brilliant crowd
Cinque-parted danc'd, some half asleep reposed
Beneath the green-fan'd cedars, some did shroud
In silken tents, and 'mid light fragrance dozed,
Or on the open turf their soothed eyelids closed.

LXXVIII

Dropp'd my gold watch, and kill'd a kettledrum—
It went for apoplexy—foolish folks !—
Left it to pay the piper—a good sum—
(I've got a conscience, maugre people's jokes)
To scrape a little favour ; 'gan to coax
Her highness' pug-dog—got a sharp rebuff—
She wish'd a game at whist—made three revokes—
Turn'd from myself, her partner, in a huff ;
His majesty will know her temper time enough.

LXXIX

She cried for chess—I play'd a game with her—
Castled her king with such a vixen look,
It bodes ill to his majesty—(refer
To the second chapter of my fortieth book;
And see what hoity-toity airs she took,) ·
At half-past four the morn essay'd to beam—
Saluted, as we pass'd, an early rook—
The Princess fell asleep, and, in her dream,
Talk'd of one Master Hubert, deep in her esteem.

LXXX

About this time,—making delightful way,—
Shed a quill-feather from my larboard wing—
Wish'd, trusted, hop'd 'twas no sign of decay—
Thank Heaven, I'm hearty yet!—'twas no such
thing.—
At five the golden light began to spring,
With fiery shudder through the bloomed east ;
At six we heard Panthea's churches ring—
The city all her unhiv'd swarms had cast,
To watch our grand approach, and hail us as we pass'd

LXXXI

As flowers turn their faces to the sun,
So on our flight with hungry eyes they gaze,
And, as we shap'd our course, this, that way run,
With madcap pleasure, or hand-clasp'd amaze,
Sweet in the air a mild-ton'd music plays,
And progresses through its own labyrinth ;
Buds gather'd from the green spring's middle days,
They scatter'd,—daisy, primrose, hyacinth,—
Or round white columns wreath'd from capital to plinth.

LXXXII

Onward we floated o'er the panting streets,
That seem'd throughout with upheld faces paved;
Look where we will, our bird's-eye vision meets
Legions of holiday; bright standards waved,
And fluttering ensigns emulously craved
Our minute's glance; a busy thunderous roar,
From square to square, among the buildings raved,
As when the sea, at flow, gluts up once more
The craggy hollowness of a wild reefed shore.

LXXXIII

And 'Bellanaine for ever!' shouted they,
While that fair Princess, from her winged chair,
Bow'd low with high demeanour, and, to pay
Their new-blown loyalty with guerdon fair,
Still emptied, at meet distance, here and there,
A plenty horn of jewels. And here I
(Who wish to give the devil her due) declare
Against that ugly piece of calumny,
Which calls them highland pebble-stones not worth
a fly.

LXXXIV

Still 'Bellanaine!' they shouted, while we glide
'Slant to a light Ionic portico,
The city's delicacy, and the pride
Of our Imperial Basilic: a row
Of lords and ladies, on each hand, make show
Submissive of knee-bent obeisance,
All down the steps; and, as we enter'd, lo!
The strangest sight—the most unlook'd-for chance—
All things turn'd topsy-turvy in a devil's dance.

LXXXV

Stead of his anxious majesty and court
 At the open doors, with wide saluting eyes,
Congees and scapegraces of every sort,
 And all the smooth routine of gallantries,
 Was seen, to our immoderate surprise,
 A motley crowd thick gather'd in the hall,
 Lords, scullions, deputy-scul lions, with wild cries
 Stunning the vestibule from wall to wall,
 Where the Chief Justice on his knees and hands doth
 crawl.

LXXXVI

Counts of the palace, and the state purveyor
 Of moths' down, to make soft the royal beds,
 The Common Council and my fool Lord Mayor
 Marching a-row, each other slipshod treads ;
 Powder'd bag-wigs and ruffy-tuffy heads
 Of cinder wenches meet and soil each other ;
 Toe crush'd with heel ill-natur'd fighting breeds,
 Frill-rumpling elbows brew up many a bother,
 And fists in the short ribs keep up the yell and pother.

LXXXVII

A Poet, mounted on the Court-Clown's back,
 Rode to the Princess swift with spurring heels,
 And close into her face, with rhyming clack,
 Began a Prothalamion ;—she reels,
 She falls, she faints ! while laughter peels
 Over her woman's weakness. ' Where ! ' cried I,
 ' Where is his majesty ? ' No person feels
 Incln'd to answer ; wherefore instantly
 I plung'd into the crowd to find him or to die.

LXXXVIII

Jostling my way I gain'd the stairs, and ran
To the first landing, where, incredible !
I met, far gone in liquor, that old man,
That vile imposter Hum,——

So far so well,——

For we have prov'd the Mago never fell
Downstairs on Crafticanto's evidence ;
And therefore duly shall proceed to tell,
Plain in our own original mood and tense,
The sequel of this day, though labour 'tis immense.

No more was written.

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